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INDIAN SPIRITUALITY;

OR,

THE TRAVELS AND TEACHINGS OF SIVANARAYAN.

BY

MOHINI MOHAN CHATTERJI, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE "BHAGAVAD GITA."

London:
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Cat No. 1634
16/11/2011

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CORRIGENDA.

Page 21, line 16, *add a comma after* pilgrims.
„ 21 „ 2 *of note, read* pilgrims and as temple attendants.
„ 26 „ 21, *for* in *read* on.
„ 35 „ 26, *for* Baroda *read* ruling.
„ 56 „ 32, *for* in the search *read* in their search.
„ 65 „ 15, *for* ghat *read* ghāt.
„ 76 „ 14, *for* shrines *read* shrine.
„ 79 „ 32, *for* Brahmanic *read* Brahminic.
„ 90 „ 28, 29, *for* can alone *read* alone can.
„ 97 „ 17, 18, *for* drowns all human voice *read* drowns the voice of man.
„ 125 „ 24, *for* Vyāritis *read* Vyāhritis.
„ 126 „ 35, *for* knows *and* shows *read* know *and* show.
„ 141 „ 4, *for* trouble *read* troubles.

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INDIAN SPIRITUALITY.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage—Early instruction—Brahminical thread—Holy ascetics—Breaking off ties—Renunciation of caste—At service—Rampore Boalia—Fighting Pundits.

Sivanarayan, who in time came to be known as the Paramhansa Sivanarayan Swāmi, was born in a Brahmin family, near Benares. His father was named Vyāsdeva, his mother Gangā Devi. He was one of a family of four sons. Further particulars of his birth and family are not known.

At the age of 5 years the thought constantly arose in his mind—"Who am I? What is my real nature? People speak of God, but who is He? Where was I all this time, and whither have I to go? What is there for me to do?" Sometimes he would ask himself—"Who has made this body of mine with its organs and faculties of action and sensation? I or my parents? If I made it, why is it I do not remember my own act, and why is it I cannot unmake the body at will, and why, above all, am I perplexed with doubts concerning all these things?"

One day, troubled by his anxious thoughts, the boy Sivanarayan spoke to his mother—"Did you make this body of mine or did somebody else make it? If somebody else, show me that person." The question sorely grieved the mother. "Alas!" she cried in tears, "that my little child should lose his mind." Turning to her son Lakhshmi Narayan, she asked him to fetch the father to see what had come over the child.

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The father was perplexed. He scolded Sivanarayan for talking nonsense, and sent him to the family schoolmaster, himself teaching the boy at the same time the practice of devotion according to certain rules. Sivanarayan obeyed his father. But his love of learning could not keep pace with his zeal for the practice of religion. In the result he gained inwardly in strength, truth, and joy, and received constant attention from the schoolmaster's rod.

The pedagogic discipline forced many thoughts on Sivanarayan's mind. "I can well see," he reflected, "the fruits of learning. The teacher sees not what is in my mind, but is busy in dealing out punishment. The learned and unlearned alike eat, drink, and die. The only difference I see is that the well-instructed man can discriminate between truth and error, and thus perform his temporal and spiritual duties better than the ignorant man. Else what good is there in learning which can only bring as its reward money and worldly position? The learned and unlearned are equally ignorant of what preceded birth and what follows death, and in deep dreamless slumber the learned know not their learning and the unlearned their want of it."

Sivanarayan received his Brahminical thread between 8 and 9 years of age. "Why have my parents," he thought, "put round my neck strings of thread like the halter of a domestic beast? God has not ordained this. Else He would have created the Brahmin's thread along with limbs of his body. The wise will never mistake it for a gift from God. This is merely a distinction, imagined by man, as the dyed garments of the religious mendicant. If, leaving aside these outer things, the eye is turned to the body of flesh and blood and the subtle faculties of action and sensation that work in and through that body, all are seen to be alike and the distinctions disappear." To avoid giving pain, Sivanarayan kept his thoughts to

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himself, and persevered in the practice of devotion, leaving for a future day to decide the question of the holy thread. Hearing people speak of the holiness of religious ascetics—'sādhus' and 'mahātmās'—Sivanarayan sought for opportunities of meeting them. One day he heard that a great and holy mahātmā had arrived in the village. Having approached him with humility Sivanarayan laid before him, when alone, the questionings of his boyish mind.

"What is an ascetic, whom men variously call 'sādhu,' 'sannyāsi,' and 'mahātmā'?" asked Sivanarayan. "What thing is indicated by these names? The limbs and members of the body are the same in an ascetic as in a householder. The organs of sensation and action are also the same in both. What peculiar thing, then, is called an ascetic? If speech be that thing, it equally belongs to the householder. If daubing with mud and ashes be the ascetic, then hogs and buffaloes can claim that name. If long, matted hair (*jatā*) be the ascetic, then an ancient banyan is entitled to that epithet. Is that red, black, or white which men call an ascetic? Be pleased to remove my doubts. Men say you are a great ascetic, but why do they say so? What is it, after all?"

The man of ascetic holiness in great wrath raised his stick over the boy, but gave him only a slap or two.

"You were born only yesterday," he said, "and you want to make fun of me."

Sivanarayan tried to soothe him by further humility, but was chased away with blows. A complaint was made to the father, who admonished the boy in the orthodox fashion, with cuffs and slaps. Sivanarayan found by experience great renouncers of the world were often great men of wrath. To put a doubt before them for solution was an unfailing source of hard knocks and harder words.

Some time thereafter a 'sādhu' came to the place who

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was of a different mould. He was gentle in manner and speech, of a joyous and radiant nature, truth-loving, just, and devoted to God. Sivanarayan questioned him as he had questioned the others. With sweet gentleness, he asked who had put such doubts into the boy's mind. Learning that the doubts arose of themselves, untaught by man, he declared his inability to remove them.

"He who has raised the doubts," he said, "will in His own good time remove them."

He spoke in praise of Sivanarayan and the family in which he was born, and bowed down to him with respect. The boy in his turn bowed down to the holy man and returned home.

"You have four sons," Sivanarayan said to his parents one day; "amongst them I am one. Consider me as dead. By the command of the All-Comprehending God, I have to remove from the world its heavy burden of suffering. A constraint has been laid on me to work for the welfare of all. Permit me to engage in this work."

"You are but a child," they said, "how can it be possible for you to accomplish what you propose to do? You must kill us before we let you go."

"What you say is true," replied Sivanarayan; "what power have I to take away the world's burden? I am only the instrument. God will guide me to the accomplishment of the end appointed by Him. Put not your love on me. Let me go."

"Can parents," said they, "send their child away? Besides, you are a backward child, and have made but little progress in learning. How can anything be done by you?"

"My learning," replied Sivanarayan, "is God, who rules all hearts. I have no need to gain external knowledge."

But the parents would not part with their child. The human parent refused permission to what the Divine

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Parent enjoined. God was the God of all, and to obey Him was to obey all—thus thinking, the boy of 12 quitted, in the dead of night, his childhood's home for ever.

The homeless wanderer of tender years constantly asked himself—"Whither shall I go first? What wants, in different parts of the country, are troubling men of high and low degrees? How can those wants be removed? What will induce men to look on all with equal love and see the one God in all? Whatever will make all men gentle and simple, learned and unlearned, monks and householders, happy by the fulfilment of their temporal and spiritual needs, it is my duty to accomplish." He perpetually prayed to the All-Comprehending Complete Being, who is expressed as light, for the enlightenment of a world buried in darkness. He prayed that hate, contention, and strife might disappear from amongst all creatures, and that the world might rejoice for ever.

Finding him roving over the country with no apparent purpose, men would ask him whether he was a 'sādhu' or a householder, of what caste he was, had he studied the Vedas, or was he illiterate, and so forth. In reply he would say he was devoid of learning, ignorant of the Vedas, did not know what a 'sādhu' or a householder was. "All I know," he used to say, "is that I am a man like you, possessed of similar faculties, limbs, and organs. I am searching this mass of flesh and bone, and should I find in it what you call caste I shall communicate to you the discovery."

"How is this," someone asked, "wearing the sacred thread you can't say what your caste is?"

"What of that?" replied Sivanarayan. "You too are wearing a piece of cloth made of thread. Is caste a name for thread?"

Afterwards he found within himself as the true Brahminical thread the soul presiding over the threefold

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powers (Gunas),[1] going forth like three strands of strings, and called by men Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva; he found the three strands tied together into five knots, known as the five elements (*tattwas*). The same One, expressed as light, he found intelligently working as the life-breath in the nostrils, in the ears as *ākāsa* or the faculty of hearing, and so forth. He then took off the Brahminical thread, believed in by man, and hung it up on the branch of a tree.

In the course of his itinerancy Sivanarayan came to Bengal. One day, having asked for food to support life, he was advised by a gentleman to work for his livelihood, and feel ashamed to beg.

"It is true," said Sivanarayan, "a wise man ought to earn his livelihood by his own labour. But I am in the service of a Master who owns the universe. Still, I am willing to serve you, if you would employ me."

"If you are in God's service," the gentleman remarked, "then how is it that you are obliged to beg? Can He not find you food?"

Sivanarayan replied that of one who has firm faith in God all wants are fulfilled. The gentleman offered him Rs. 2 a month for wages, besides food and clothes which would be found, and ordered him to take his place among the door-keepers. He accepted the service, but refused the wages. In surprise the gentleman inquired if he had no parents to whom the money would be useful. He did not reply, but begged to be allowed to let the matter stand over until the end of his employment.

At the slightest hint Sivanarayan did all that was required of him, whether menial or otherwise. His employer was glad he had found a servant who worked better than the others and cost nothing but his keep.

[1] Prakriti or nature is the totality of God's powers, divisible into three classes—cognitive, active, and resistive. Each of these classes is called a *Gunah*, which means literally a string.

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After two or three months Sivanarayan secretly left, and at Rampore Boalia entered the service of a merchant named Devidas. Finding him retiring, reticent, correct in his accounts, managing the dispatch of goods with unusual economy and promptitude, never attempting to shirk work, the merchant used to call him a fool, ignorant of the world, but believed him to be of gentle birth.

Devidas was in the habit of using foul language to all he had to do with. One day he showered on a servant unusually coarse abuse. Sivanarayan, who was present, said in all humility, with joined palms,[1] "You are in the position of a father to me, being my employer. Be not offended at my words, but pardon my boldness. Listen to me kindly. You are the master and these are your servants; they earn their bread under your protection. Though poor, they are respectable. Make them work with pleasant words. It hurts their feelings to be abused for every trifle. Suppose they were rich and you poor and they abused you as you are abusing them, how should you have felt? Wealth does not last for ever, troubles come to all, at one time or another. Wealth does not come with us into the world nor go with us out of it."

Devidas waxed wroth and with the rankest abuse drove away Sivanarayan from his house. The merchant was not to blame, thought Sivanarayan; the intoxication of wealth and power had taken away his judgment and hardened his heart. The wise alone, though blessed with all that the world esteems, can hold their hearts in God and work for the good of all with a sober understanding and peaceful contentment.

Sivanarayan retired to a solitary spot on the Padmā and sat down by the water's edge, abstaining from all sustenance except the river-water. In a little while this

[1] This attitude of humility is perhaps reminiscent of a time when a man in approaching another had to show his want of weapons in order to secure a friendly reception.

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was reported abroad. Devidas with several pundits came to him and, unsuccessfully, tried to dissuade him from the course he had adopted. They offered to feed him there or elsewhere as might be desired, and cited the authority of the Shastras against the practice of severe austerities. Devidas's death, which quickly followed, was superstitiously ascribed to the curse of Sivanarayan, who, in consequence, decided to leave the place.

Wandering in obscure and unimportant places he could not benefit except a few people. By the support of some powerful prince or pundit, his object might be gained. But the bent of mind of princes, pundits, and common people had grown much alike. With equal readiness they fled from words of truth and the path of righteousness as if from evil. But as God, the Ruler of hearts, had given him his work to do, he decided to approach the Raja of Benares, who protected a large assembly of pundits.

Before leaving Rampore Boalia, Sivanarayan witnessed a fight between pundits. The town contains a temple belonging to 'sannyāsis' of the 'Bhārati' order. In the idol's room two pundits were engaged in Shastric disputation. One of the pundits was from Benares, the other from Ghazipore. In course of the disputation the Benares pundit accused his opponent of using an ungrammatical expression. In anger the other offered to lay a bet of Rs. 25 and have the matter referred to the decision of a conclave of pundits at Benares. But the impugnant of his speech would not accept a bet above Rs. 5. The dispute waxed hot. From words they came to blows.

The Ghazipore pundit excelled in wrestling, and soon mounting on his antagonist's chest dared him to repeat the accusation. Both the combatants overlooked the fact that their warlike movements had upset the idols and set them rolling on the floor. The sight enraged the attendant priest.

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"You rascals!" he shouted, "you are having a learned disputation, but what have my gods done that you have reduced them to such a plight?"

The priest was ready to enforce his remonstrance with a stout stick. Overcome by such a powerful argument, the Benares pundit yielded the point, and finally put his recantation into writing at the victor's dictate. Sivanarayan sought to pacify them both.

"Such results," he said, "always ensue from attending to words in exclusion of the substance indicated by them. If it is desired to indicate the thing called water, it is immaterial, so long as the thing is perceived, whether the term used is grammatical or not. Grammar is not man's master. Understanding all things in this way, let men perform their duties temporal and spiritual, and they will attain to blessedness."

CHAPTER II.

The Raja of Benares—His Pundit—Hindu gods—The Ramnagar Mohunt—Bāruni at Benares—Mother Gangā—Viswanāth.

It was morning. At Ramnagar, Sivanarayan stood at the palace gate of the Raja of Benares. A tattered sheet of cloth was wrapped round him, and in other respects his appearance was not without a suggestion of the madman.

"Tell the Raja," he said to the gate-keeper, "a man desires to converse with him concerning God. Let him not fear any begging petition."

"Vagabonds like you," said the Raja's retainer, "are coming and going in numbers. For how many am I to carry messages? Besides, the man whose duty it is to

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announce visitors is not here at present. When he comes he might do what you want."

For three parts of the day Sivanarayan sat at the Raja's gate, unnoticed. At last one of the personal attendants of the Raja came to the gate and he repeated his request. The servant returned after a time, and in the Raja's name asked Sivanarayan for an account of himself. He only repeated what he had said to the gate-keeper, and the servant went away. In a little while a pundit came from the Raja and asked the stranger what religion he had adopted. In reply Sivanarayan asked what substance was called religion and into how many classes was it divided.

"I am," said the pundit, "speaking of the religion of the four orders of men, *Brahamachāri* or celibate student, *Grihastha* or householder, *Vānaprastha* or forest-dweller, and *Sannyāsi* or wandering friar."

"You are merely repeating what you have read in books about the four orders. I too have committed to memory what the books say. But how should you know whether I practise the religion I profess? You can't tell it by any external mark on my body. If flesh, bones, or the limbs and faculties of man be called by the name of 'sannyāsi,' then all men, being possessed of them, would be equally entitled to that name."

"The great-souled 'sannyāsis' can be known by the characteristics given in the Shastras."

"But how can you know the heart of a man who has created in himself those external characteristics?"

"Somehow or other the heart can be known. But let that pass. Are you learned in Sanskrit, have you studied any Shastras?"

"Very little do I know of Sanskrit or the Shastras," said Sivanarayan, smiling at the test he was put to.

"Do you believe in Durgā, Siva, Vishnu, and the other gods and goddesses?"

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"Why," asked Sivanarayan, "do you put this question? I believe in everything, and yet believe not. It behoves us to consider with discrimination what and where the substance is that is called gods and goddesses? If they transcend all forms, being formless, attributeless (*Nirākāra, Nirguna*), Brahma or Supreme Being, they cannot be perceived by the senses. The five *tattwas* or elements and the sun and moon are present before us, and are Brahma manifested in form (*Sākāra, Saguna*). Besides what is named nothing else is, was, or can be. I believe in the All-Comprehending, Complete, Supreme Being who is formless and expressed in and as the forms. If your gods and goddesses are distinct from that Being and yet real, tell me what they are or show them to me and I shall believe."

"Vishnu is in Vaikuntha, Brahmā in his own sphere (*loka*), Siva, Durga, and Kali in Kailas, and at Benares. How shall I show them to you?"

"If they live, each in his own house, how is the work of this universe, moving and stationary, carried on? If God is not within you how will He know of your good and evil works, your joys and sorrows, and how will He take away the burden of your sufferings?"

"In us He dwells in secret, but at Benares within the view of all."

"What substance," asked Sivanarayan, "is Benares, and in what form does Siva dwell there—as earth, stone, and wood, or in the human form? If he has put on the form of a man, surely you can show him; if he is stock, stone, and earth, he is everywhere. For no place exists where those things are not. The objects named are easily destroyed by fire, but is Siva destroyed thereby? If the gods and goddesses exist as the five elements or as the light, called the sun and moon, there can be no reason for seeking them more in one place than in another. Learned sir, know your God, the Ruler of

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your being, Him, who is the soul, presiding over the three *gunas*, who is formless and possessed of forms, and expressed as light. Of Him Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva, and many other names are imagined by men. He will remove all your errors and establish you in supreme joy. Fall into error no longer, nor drag others into it."

The pundit retired, and what he said to the Raja is unknown. But it was evident from his manner that he was not without fear of his class losing their occupation if Sivanarayan's words found acceptance.

Shortly a palace-guard came and ordered Sivanarayan away. He begged for the night's shelter, and was threatened with the police. He was without food for two days, but the Raja and his retainers were unconcerned. Hungry and thirsty, Sivanarayan was driven away from the great man's door.

Sivanarayan sat down on the steps leading into the tank, near where the festival of Ramlila is celebrated. A little way beyond was a *Mohunt* (abbot) with his disciple monks. The Raja entertained them daily with reverence.

"Who are you?" shouted one of the disciples as Sivanarayan approached the ascetic group; "what brings you here?"

"I am a man, and seeing you are men I have come near you."

"Everybody can see you are a man. But are you a householder or a 'sannyāsi'?"

"I hear of a householder, I hear of a 'sannyāsi,' but I don't know what thing it is that either term indicates."

"Seize him and bring him to me," cried the Mohunt, "and I shall show him both."

The master's mandate was carried out.

"You don't know," exclaimed the Mohunt, "a householder from a great-souled 'sannyāsi'? Look round. Don't you see this assembly of the great-souled ones

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(*Mahātmās*)? We belong to the Sringeri Monastery (Matha), established by the renowned Sankarāchārya. Ten orders of monks were instituted by him bearing ten different names—'Giri,' 'Puri,' 'Bharati,' etc. We are *dandis* (staff-bearers) and belong to the sect with the ten names (*dasnāmis*). We have other distinctions, such as *Chulā*[1] (fireplace), *Chāki*[2] (grinding-stone), and so forth. Besides, there are the orders founded by Ramanuja, Madhvāchārya, Vishnuswāmi, and the others. You don't seem to know anything at all."

"In the householder condition men bear as tails the distinctions of caste, family, and *gotra* (sept). But you have a long tail of distinctions although a Mahātmā. With your *gurus* (masters), and brethren through gurus, your families are exceedingly large. The householder's part seems the better."

"You rascal!" thundered the Mohunt, "how is the householder's the better part? The *Brahamachāri* is better than the householder, and the *Paramhansa* the best of all. I have attained to that best position. How many times am I, then, superior to the householder?"

"Don't give way to anger," said Sivanarayan; "reflect soberly. When you were in the householder's condition you had the same physical body and faculties of action and sensation as you have now. Then, as now, you had to walk on the earth, you carried with you the five *tattwas* (elements) wherever you went. Then of what thing inherent in the householder did you disburden yourself in adopting a *Brahamachāri's* life? Of what other things have you been divested in the gradual progress to your present condition? What is the substance called Paramhansa? Is it merely a figment of the mind? Have you renounced and accepted mere names? In the householder's condition yours was a life of attachment to external things. Now

[1] This distinction marks the group using the same kitchen.
[2] Exclusively used by a group of ascetics.

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you have professed to adopt the life of detachment. See if you can make detachment your own. The man who, though a householder, can feel evenly to both forms of life is a hero. Cowards fly from the life of the world, unable to hear the outgoing impulses of the mind. In the two forms of life the difference is only one of conditions, qualities, and acts. The soul remains the same in all conditions, its real nature unchanged. If I have spoken words of untruth or unreason, instruct me, I pray."

"Many words of unwisdom you have spoken. I will instruct you. Be my disciple. Many learned pundits and wealthy princes acknowledge me as master (*guru*)."

"What is a *guru* and what is a disciple, O Mahātmā?"

"You rascal! you don't know me, and want to teach me wisdom? I shall turn you into ashes."

"You have shown me," rejoined Sivanarayan, "who you are. Nothing is impossible with you. Take a hair from my body and turn it to ashes first, and then do the same to me. How many have you turned to ashes already? O great-souled one, is there a soul which can turn or be turned into ashes? If you cast aside the pride of Shastric learning and seek refuge in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as light, the true teacher and soul, you will have peace and dwell in everlasting joy. Walk the path of righteousness and errors will cease to trouble you."

"Sir," said the Mohunt, "you have said much that is true and wise. Who may you be? Are you a monk or a Paramhansa? I can see no distinctive marks on you."

"How can I express in words who you are or I am? I am what I am. I can only say that I am a man, the same as you."

"I have" said he, "spoken to you, in ignorance, unworthily. Out of your own goodness forgive me. I salute you exclaiming—*Om Namah Narayanay Namah*" ("Salutation to the All-Comprehending Being, the goal of

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man's existence," the usual formula of salutation between sannyāsis).

Summing up his experiences of this period Sivanarayan says:—"The ways and conversations of monks and pundits, princes and common people, are much alike. None desire God. With the pundit the first question is, 'Can you expound the Shastras?' If you say 'Yes' a fruitless disputation is started, while abuse and ill-treatment follow a negative answer. Monks drive away everyone not of their order or not professing a knowledge of magic or alchemy. Princes want to know if you have become perfected. From one believed to be perfect they ask as boons male children and increase of wealth and power. If you say 'Is the soul of such a nature that it can be imperfect at one time and perfect at another? What has one to do with perfection or imperfection?' the consequence is instant expulsion. One cannot go amongst the common people without being asked for riches, children, or magical cures. None desire the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as light, the parent of all. Such is the world's way."

Another time Sivanarayan stayed at a house on the Ganges at Benares. It was the morning of the holy *Bāruni* day (the great bathing festival). Many pundits and other people of the better sort had gathered round him for instruction. While leaving they requested him to accompany them to the Ganges for a ceremonial bath.

"It is good," he replied, "to observe the bathing ceremony. But what good follows the observance must be carefully considered."

"Mother Ganges," struck in one of the pundits, "washes away all sins, if bathed in on a day like this."

"You call the Ganges your mother. Is it dutiful in a son to present his mother with the uncleanness of his sins? Yield to her all the merits you prize, and she will take away all your sins and sorrows. But what is the

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Ganges? If formless, attributeless, and transcendent, she cannot be imaged by the mind or perceived by the senses. If the opposite pole of being, she is the Virāt or God manifest whose expression is light. Beside the Being in this dual aspect nothing is, was, or will be. If the Ganges is the same as water, one of the 'limbs of the Virāt' (the constituents of the visible universe are so called), she is to be found everywhere. That water is a form of Narayan or God is commonly known."

"You need not come to the Ganges," the pundit rejoined; "return after seeing the image of Viswanāth."[1]

"It is the duty of all," said Sivanarayan, "to see Viswanāth. Man has no other duty, in fact. On the authority of your scriptures the Viswanāth,[2] comprehending all things, moving and stationary, is the complete Being, Virāt, present within and outside all. He strings all that be upon threads of light, and by sending forth His influence is carrying on the world's work. Has He a fixed place of abode whither one has to go to see Him? Since, according to the scriptures, He is All-Comprehending, possessed of all powers and complete, then why, disregarding Him within you, should you go elsewhere for a sight of Him? If you have faith in the scriptures you need go nowhere. Without faith in the scriptures there is no Viswanāth to see. If stock or stone is imagined to be your Viswanāth I have no need to see it."

"My Lord," said one of the pundits, "your words are true, but hard to receive, owing to the darkness within us."

"Stay your hearts in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as light, the Parent of all. He will make all things clear by promptings from within."

[1] A form of Siva, the principal image at Benares.
[2] "The Lord of the World."

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CHAPTER III.

Chaugain — The bridal party — Gathering mangoes by night — The good Samaritan—Dumraon—The Raja—Nepal—Srinagar—To Amarnath—The Garbha Yoni—The vision of Amarlinga—The return journey—The pot of milk between two ascetics—The spiritual Amarnath.

Chaugain is a village near Dumraon. The Zemindar's daughter is to be married after nightfall. The bridegroom has arrived with a retinue of horses and elephants, and accompanied by a crowd of relatives and friends, to whom quarters are assigned in a garden-house. The Zemindar with his principal guests is standing outside the garden gate.

Arrived at the place, Sivanarayan addressed them, saying, "You are busy about the wedding. Conversation touching spiritual matters would now be inopportune. I shall be in the garden somewhere. You can come to me when at leisure. My stay will be short."

"I can't say, you rascal," said the Zemindar, "whether I should come or not. There are many lunatics like you here."

Sivanarayan wandered about in the garden looking on the bridal preparations. Several mahātmās were seated near the bridegroom's father. One of the holy men drew that gentleman's attention to Sivanarayan, who, he suspected, was a thief on the prowl for some valuable articles, and advised his being turned out. He was accordingly seized by two retainers and taken before the bridegroom's father.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"A man," was the reply.

"Speak the truth, you rascal, or I shall have your bones broken."

"What is the good," struck in a mahātmā, "of questioning a thief? Let him be turned out with a few cuffs."

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Orders were issued as advised, and the zealous servants drove him out with blows.

It so fell out that a severe storm then burst upon the place. In the garden-house chandeliers were broken, food spoilt, and branches torn off from trees, much to the discomfort of the wedding guests.

Two miles away Sivanarayan sought shelter under a mango-tree. The place was strewn with broken branches and mangoes shaken off from the tree. People came out of the village to gather mangoes. To prevent alarm Sivanarayan shouted out: "Don't be afraid. I am a man." All the more frightened, some raised a cry of thief and others of ghost. Men rushed out with cudgels, shouting: "Beat him, beat him!" Seeing them so ignorant, Sivanarayan said: "Fear not. I am a sādhu." They came to him and heard his instructions with gladness. After doing him reverence they went about mango-picking.

A little boy of 8 or 9 years, son of a Gossain,[1] stayed behind. With joined palms he asked Sivanarayan whence he had come, had he had anything to eat. Having learned he was fasting the whole day, the boy pressed the hospitality of his family on Sivanarayan.

"Little father," said the latter, "I don't enter a village by night. You go home. I shall get food somewhere when the day comes. Be not anxious on my account."

The boy left in silence and returned after some time with his mother and sister. The two miles of road they had to walk was heavy and sodden with rain and full of obstructions, caused by the storm. Unmindful of inconveniences, the good mother was happy in offering the fasting stranger a simple repast of milk and fruit. She begged Sivanarayan, on a night like that, to accept the shelter of her house.

"Go back to your home, mother," said he. "Hold

[1] A spiritual guide of the Vaishnava sect.

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your thoughts steadfast in the All-Comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, and He will take away all your troubles."

The mother and children saluted Sivanarayan and left.

Next day Sivanarayan appeared before the palace gate of Dumraon. The heir-apparent left in a palanquin to enjoy the fresh air of the garden. In a little while the Maharaja came out, whom Sivanarayan addressed, saying: "Be collected, Maharaja, and listen. I have a word to say."

"Can't you," said the Maharaja in anger, turning to his attendants, "can't you keep away such importunate beggars from my presence?"

Taking the hint, one of the retainers pushed Sivanarayan by the neck, letting his turban fall down in his violence. This increased his rage, which he vented on Sivanarayan in kicks and cuffs of unusual vigour. The Maharaja was pleased with the ready zeal of his retainer.

"No blame," thought Sivanarayan, "attaches to these poor princes. Their spirit and intelligence must conform to the nature of the stocks and stones they worship. Had they been worshippers of the Supreme Being, manifested as light, the teacher and soul of all, their minds would have been illuminated by wisdom and their hearts quickened by benevolence. Then they would have known who I and they truly are."

Providing himself with the necessary permit, Sivanarayan slowly worked his way to the capital of Nepal. Meeting one of the princes as he issued from the palace, Sivanarayan accosted him—"O Prince, listen attentively." The Prince turned aside, directing an official to send away the mendicant with a small alms of money. All princes were equally blind. Sivanarayan passed Ekdanda and Sessagadi, reaching Jwalamukhi by the hill route. He proceeded to Hardwar, and thence walked on to Jammoo, where he did not find the Maharaja of Kashmir, who had previously left for Srinagar.

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Sivanarayan arrived at Srinagar, taking the town of Mattan on the way. Within the palace precincts he found the junior Dewan distributing to 'sādhus' and beggars the necessaries for their pilgrimage to Amarnath. This being over, he asked the official to obtain for him a short interview with the Maharaja.

"Are you," asked the Dewan, "a sādhu, sannyāsi, or pundit that the Maharaja would grant you an audience? Had you been a sādhu or sannyāsi your wearing apparel would have been dyed brown and your neck garlanded with *rudrākhsa* beads. But I find none of these distinctive marks on you. If you be a pundit repeat some *slokas* (verses) from the Shastras you have studied. An interview with the Maharaja is impossible without Sanskrit learning. Mendicant paupers like you come and go every day. If you wish to visit Amarnath I shall give you the customary two rupees and a sufficient dole of rice and pulse."

"Where," said Sivanarayan, "is the need to know if I am learned or unlearned, sādhu or not? I only desire to see the Maharaja to point out to him how the creation suffers, and instruct him concerning God. Whether princes and learned men see me or not—it is nothing to me personally. I do not lose or gain thereby."

"Return after some days and I shall get you an interview."

"I shall go away in a day or two."

"Please yourself," said the official, ending the interview.

Sivanarayan departed from the city and sat down by the roadside. Strings of pilgrims to Amarnath, ascetics and laymen, passed by. Accepting it as in God's scheme he joined the crowd. Obtaining the necessary supplies at Mattan, where the journey was broken, the march to Amarnath was resumed. Every night the pilgrims camped out in the woods which skirted the road. Some of

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the accompanying pāndās[1] or priestly guides would at times start in advance and, near some mountain spring, dig a small pool, scattering wild flowers round it. As the procession drew near they would recite the sacred glories of the pool, where by offering in worship from 2½ annas to Rs. 1¼ the devotee could secure the choice of Siva or Vishnu's heaven. Thus the pāndās gained money and the believers lost their reason.

At one place some of the pāndās ascended an eminence, and placing one stone on another declared, "Whoso will do likewise and give alms of money will acquire more merit on this spot than anywhere else on earth." Between two and three thousand pilgrims, ascetics and laymen, followed the advice, contributing to the derisive amusement of some Englishmen and many Mahomedans who, out of curiosity, were following the pilgrims on horseback.

The procession moved on and halted by the side of a tarn, the dwelling-place of a brood of snakes, one of the reptiles being, as the pāndās revealed to the believers, the god Siva in disguise. Salutations to Siva and gifts to the pāndās were quickly made, lest the god-snake should disappear under water before the worship ended.

Six miles below Amarnath is the village of Bhairogaddi. Pilgrims leave their belongings here. By night they ascend the hill of Amarnath to obtain the blessed sight of the god Amarlinga, ere the sun is high in heaven.

The heat of the day would melt the frozen covering of the stalagmite which is worshipped as the god. During the night march several persons disappeared in the snow that filled the ravine by the side of the pilgrim path, and perished before the arrival of help. At the end of the day's march a detached monolith, rising to a height of about 10 feet, was, under priestly direction, worshipped as

[1] Inferior priests, attached to holy Hindu shrines, who act as guides to pilgrims and temple attendants.

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the god Bhairav, and the customary gifts made to the pāndās. Suddenly one of them shouted—"Look! look! a pair of pigeons are flying away from the cave of Amarnath. They will be invisible to the sinful and visible only to the righteous."

Loud rose the chorus, "I have seen them! I have seen them!" and, in the general desire to avert the imputation of sin, a discussion was raised on the form and colour of the birds. The pāndās were not slow to turn the occasion to their own advantage.

The cave of Amarnath lies behind a precipice in which there is a narrow natural tunnel affording space for a man to pass either way. The pāndās call this orifice the *Garbha-Yoni* (Originating Womb). It is believed that a passage through the orifice, after acquiring the merit of distributing alms on the spot, frees the soul from the wheel of transmigration. On each side of the tunnel a Mahomedan guard exacts a fee of one pice. Unable to meet this demand Sivanarayan had to take a roundabout path. He studied God's purpose and felt for the sufferings of His creatures. The wheel of rebirth troubled him not.

The pilgrims approached the cave of Amarnath. Snow melting in a higher region formed a stream which the pāndās called the Amargangā (the Ganges of the Immortals). Directed by priestly guides, pilgrims of both sexes plunge into this stream *in puris naturalibus*. Thus cleansed of all sins they besmear themselves with holy ashes, purchased from the Mahomedans who dwell in pits all around. After further alms they become fitted for a vision of the god. Natural modesty, in the case of some women, compelled them to wear a scanty skirt of leaves, to the scandal of their holier companions. These proceedings caused the visitors of alien faiths to clap their hands in contemptuous laughter.

The alms collected in this place is divided into four

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parts; one goes to the pāndās, another applied to the maintenance of the roads, and the rest taken by the Mahomedan Troglodytes. In the cave two pieces of stalagmite covered by a coating of ice, polished by the pāndās betimes, are revealed to the pilgrims as Siva and his consort Pārvati. The devotees prostrate themselves before these, and go through the pantomime of placing the dust off the divine feet on their heads, for dust there is none here. Emerging from the cave thankful gratuities are made to the pāndās.

Sivanarayan did not bathe in the Amargangā or besmear himself with ashes, or make prostrations to the gods. He watched the scene from a distance, and was hated as an impenitent sinner.

The night was passed at Bhairogaddi to pick up the pilgrims' effects.

"Eternal hell," said Sivanarayan to the pilgrim crowd, "is the portion of one who tells a lie in a holy place, and the telling of truth secures the unending joy of salvation. I did not see the pigeons of Amarnath."

First one, then another, and then all together said, "I too did not see them."

At Mattan the pilgrims rested another night. Near the rest-house a man was carrying a pot of milk for sale. A 'sādhu' of the Ramanuja sect settled the price at one rupee and four annas, and desired the milk to be taken to his lodgings. A great-souled 'sannyāsi' of Sankara's sect asked the milkman the price of the milk.

"Two rupees eight annas," said the milkman.

"Take it to my lodgings, I will pay that price."

"You can't have the milk," struck in the 'sādhu,' "I have bought it."

"Hold your tongue, or I shall pound you up and drink you off like bhāng.[1]"

[1] A preparation of the leaves of the Indian hemp-tree.

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"Have you ever done that service to any man?"

Pulled contrary ways by the holy men in anger, the earthen pot broke in pieces, spilling the contents on the ground. The sannyāsi hit the Vaishnav monk with his stick, and a general engagement ensued between the members of the rival sects, resulting in broken limbs to both parties. The disturbance attracted a large number of Mahomedans of the town. They separated the combatants with impartial distribution of blows.

"You fellows," said the preservers of peace, "you have shaved your heads and become saints indeed! You can't live in peace, but must needs fight. Householders are better. They work to maintain their families, are hospitable to strangers, and have faith in God."

"The merit," said Sivanarayan, addressing the pilgrims, "the merit of the pilgrimage to Amarnath has soon borne fruit. The wounded saints are enjoying Kailas and Vaikuntha in the midst of their torments. Neither monks nor householders know the true Amarnath. It is one of the names of God, manifested as light. He neither grows nor wanes. He is all-knowing, all-comprehending, complete. Seeing Him the mortal becomes immortal, dwelling in everlasting joy. Prakriti (power) and Purusha (sentience)—sun and moon—are the two pigeons proceeding from Him and are present before our eyes. The righteous alone know Him truly, the sinful turn their faces away from Him. Desire and delusion are the *Garbha-Yoni* which the devotee crosses, and bathing in the Ganges of wisdom rests in union with God a naked soul. His eyes see naught beside God and his true self. You are wandering from place to place, blind to the essential truth. Seek refuge in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, complete and manifested as light. He will take away your burdens."

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CHAPTER IV.

Barāmula—The Modi shop—Peshawar—Hindu and Moslem—In praise of British rule—No money, no caste—Amritsar—God in the golden temple—The Sukhatalao—The holy thief—The palace at Jodhpur—Mount Abu—Girnar—Ramānanda's umbrella—Ambika Bhowani's Temple—The Nāgās—True saints—Cannibalism as a rite—The Serowghi Temple—A test of credulity.

From Srinagar on his way to the Punjab Sivanarayan arrived at Barāmula. About two miles beyond the military outposts two Brahmins were lying down on a charpoy (stringed bedstead) at a modi shop.[1] Two Mahomedans rode up to the place and told them to get up. As soon as they declared themselves Brahmins whip-cuts rained down, making them cry for mercy with shrieks of pain. The Moslems felt no mercy, but with added fury shouted, "You low-born unbelievers, you don't stand up in our presence, but are lying down." The shopkeeper humbly craved forgiveness, and shared the fate of his guests.

"What for," Sivanarayan said, soothing the angry Moslems, "is this violence? Consider soberly what thing is it that you call Mahomedan. The substances that are in you are also in the Hindu. If Mahomedan is a name for circumcision then you too are by birth Hindus—your origin is Hindu. Why, then, do you lose self-control on hearing that name? See what pain you have caused to these innocent men. If they were stronger they would have retaliated. You would not have liked that. All are expressions of Allah. It is wrong to use violence. Walk the path of life with sobriety and discrimination."

"Your words are true," they said, "but we must follow the teachers of our faith. We have heard that Moslem is a name for truth, and yet many liars call themselves Moslems."

Crossing the Indus Sivanarayan sat down by the side

[1] A petty grocery.

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of a well in front of the Fort at Peshawar. It was about dusk. A Brahamachāri, who lived close by near a sacred fireplace, told him to seek shelter for the night within the town, which was guarded during the day by British sentries and at night its gates were shut. The Mahomedans of the place would kill anyone found outside the city gates at night. If such a one were a Hindu he would be forcibly circumcised and married to a Moslem damsel, to the utter ruin of caste.

"I need fear none," said Sivanarayan; "my caste is the lowest on earth, all castes enter into me, as all rivers flow into the sea."

After travelling for some days towards Kabul he returned and witnessed a shocking incident in a Punjab village. There were only two or three Hindu families in that village, the rest being all Mahomedans. A Hindu maiden, shrieking and struggling, was being carried away by some Mahomedans, not of the village. Her cries brought her relatives upon the scene, supplicants for her release, but they were driven back with blows.

A Hindu shopkeeper informed Sivanarayan that in the western frontier of the Punjab the position of the Hindus was most deplorable. Attractive Hindu girls were constantly abducted and married to Mahomedans by force. No redress could be obtained from the authorities, who were of the same faith. They said that the Hindu being the Mahomedan's inferior, such marriages were for the captive girls' own good. Married Hindu women, if found unprotected, would be held to ransom and robbed of their personal ornaments. Villages with considerable Hindu population would be looted every two or three years, and the women led away captive. The shopkeeper grew eloquent in praise of the British rule in Hindustan,[1] and blessed the rulers.

[1] I.e. Northern India between the Punjab and Bengal.

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"Why don't you," asked Sivanarayan, "end your troubles by migrating to Hindustan?"

"So few of us are now left," cried the man in tears, "where shall we go? Formerly we were all Hindus in these parts. A Moslem chief made many converts by forcing beef into Hindu mouths. In those days we were called Aryas and not Hindus. Having found that the name meant 'noble,' he, by a proclamation, insisted upon pain of death on the disuse of that name and the adoption of the epithet Hindu. The proclamation required us to beat our breasts in mourning for the dead and to repeat the name of Allah, abandoning those of our own gods. Even in Hindustan there is no Hindu king; the manhood of the Hindus has been reduced to the vainglorious words that issue from their lips."

Sivanarayan heard in another Punjab village that two Brahmin youths on a journey to Peshawar were, by some Mahomedans, robbed of the sacred thread and forced to taste beef. Returning home they acquainted their parents with the misfortune that had overtaken them. The advice of pundits was sought. The holy and learned conclave undertook to purify them on receipt of a fee of Rs. 200 for each. The amount was beyond the means of the penitents. Driven from their homes by piety, in tears they increased the ranks of the Mahomedans. Sivanarayan cried shame on the interpreters of the law who depended for purification on money, and compared their conduct to that of the low-caste Hindus who are purged of all offences by a generous distribution of fermented palm-juice among their caste fellows.[1]

In the Golden Temple, rising from the breast of an artificial lake, the Sikhs worshipped a book—paper, ink, and cloth—with lowly bows and offerings of money. Round about dwelt Mohunts in their monasteries and

[1] This was before British rule was firmly established. Some years separate the incidents related and those that follow.

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entertained wandering sādhus. At meal-time Sivanarayan accompanied some sādhus, who were dressed in the garb of their profession, to a monastery. Those whose holiness was attested by their garments were hospitably welcomed, and Sivanarayan unceremoniously thrown out.

He spent some days by the side of the tank named Sukhatalao, about two miles from Amritsar. Two sādhus of the place evinced much pleasure in holding constant conversations with him concerning God. This attracted to him the people of the neighbouring villages, who ministered to his wants. In course of time the Mohunts, ashamed of their previous conduct, came and prostrated themselves before him.

Rajaram Khettry, of Amritsar, was especially devoted to him. On his first visit he left for the unknown stranger a blanket, a wrapper, and a drinking vessel. Shortly afterwards, finding opportunity in Sivanarayan's absence, a sādhu who had come to see him stole those articles and pledged them with a shopkeeper for Rs. 5. He spent the money in entertaining himself with opium, ganja, and varieties of sweetmeats. Subsequently Rajaram missed his presents and questioned Sivanarayan, who merely replied: "He who had given has taken away." Suspecting they were stolen he replaced them, despite remonstrance.

In the meantime the thief returned to the shopkeeper asking for a further advance, which the latter refused, and producing the articles demanded their immediate redemption. Informed of this by a servant of his who had witnessed the incident, Rajaram caught the sādhu thief red-handed. Against the advice of the bystanders to hand over the culprit to the police after unofficial chastisement, he brought the thief to Sivanarayan, who, he said, was his police.

"You gave me these things," said Sivanarayan, after the story was told, "for my comfort. But this other man applied them to his own use. There is nothing else to do

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but to forgive and release him. True, you cannot protect the good without punishing the evildoer. But as you have brought him to me let him go."

Rajaram was wise and loved righteousness. He released the thief and redeemed the stolen property. Sivanarayan requested him to take the articles away and keep them for the use of the next stranger who would need them, as his own wanderings must be immediately resumed. Rajaram offered to procure for him a railway ticket to his immediate destination, and begged him to come again. Sivanarayan wanted to travel on foot in order the better to observe the condition of the people, and a ticket to him was useless. Rajaram all the same purchased for him a railway ticket to Rorhi Sakkar in Sindh, and wanted him to take a few gold mohurs as a provision for the journey.

"Nobody," said Rajaram, "takes any notice of you, as you are without any of the distinctive marks of a sādhu. Money will come useful in your wanderings."

"What use," replied Sivanarayan, "has a sādhu for money? He has no children to marry. Money is a necessity for a householder. It is wrong to give money to a sādhu, and wrong for him to take it. The Supreme Being, whose expression is light and who rules all hearts, is the wealth of a sādhu. What need has he for this false wealth? All he needs is a handful of food to sustain life and a piece of cloth to hide his nakedness. Food and raiment are stored for him in every house. Whatever needs he feels will be supplied by God in the form of some man. If one's thoughts are established on Him money will come when money is wanted. Keep the gold mohurs and use it for the good of your own family and the stranger who comes hungry to your door."

From Sindh, wandering through Nabha and Patiala, Sivanarayan reached Delhi, and then through Bharatpur, Karauli, and Jeypore, found himself before the palace at

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Jodhpur. It was a festive day. The house of a vassal remiss in the discharge of state dues had been razed to the ground, driving him into the jungles for shelter, with his family.

Sivanarayan in rags stood before the Raja, who in anger ordered him away. The dutiful servants took him by the arms and neck and drove him to the high road. He found all Rajas alike strangers to true humanity. A dromedary of the Raja happened upon him at a wild and lonely part of the road and induced him to share the ride to Pali and spend a night there.

At Abu Sivanarayan heard of many sages who were supposed to dwell there. He searched on all sides—above, below, and inside the caves—and found indeed many who were reputed wise and holy. They accepted service from the laity, promising to work miracles in their favour and distributing wild roots and ashes, said to confer wealth, progeny, and other objects of desire on the fortunate recipient. Higher up, near a piece of water, the Englishman was enjoying the Kailas, built by his own hands.

Leaving behind the Gaekwar's territory, Sivanarayan turned his steps towards Mount Girnar. The ascent began near a place of cremation. Hard by was a Brahamachari with his idols, whom Sivanarayan, on sitting down, did not salute.

"Who are you, rascal," exclaimed the angry Brahamachari, "that you don't bow down to my gods?"

"I see no god," replied Sivanarayan; "these are only figures of stone and metal. If these are to be bowed down to, the same homage must be paid to these hills and to all domestic utensils."

"Are you a sādhu or a householder?"

"I don't know what thing you call a sādhu and what a householder."

"Have you studied the Shastras?"

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"I have and have not," replied Sivanarayan. "It is taught in your Shastras that the sun is the eye and the moon the mind of the all-comprehending God in His visible aspect. Meditate on His expression—the light—and worship Him. He will remove all your errors and sufferings."

"True," said the Brahamachari after saluting Sivanarayan with respect, "it is so written in the Shastras, but the teaching is not generally understood or believed in."

The road winds upwards by the side of natural caves where sādhus live upon gifts of food and money received from pilgrim hands. Higher up is the Chhatra[1] or hostelry of Ramānanda, the founder of a Vaishnava sect called after him Ramānandi. The Mohunt at the head of this institution is held in great esteem. Sivanarayan sat down near him without the bow which he claimed and received from all.

"Who are you?" inquired the monk in annoyance; "to what sect of sādhus do you belong?"

"I am a man," said Sivanarayan, "the same as you are. I don't know what thing a sect is."

"I can see you are a man, you rascal, but what is your caste?"

"If you are entirely dependent on information from me I might say anything to satisfy you."

"Be off, you rascal," was the reply with which the interview ended.

Sivanarayan had heard that many holy Rishis of the Aghori sect were to be found on Mount Girnar. He searched for them unsuccessfully on all sides and came upon a Brahamachari and a Brahmin follower of Ramanuja Swāmi, and their treatment of him was an echo of the

[1] Literally, an umbrella. In the days of ascetic poverty a large one made of leaves was placed over a long pole stuck in the ground for travellers to rest under. This is the origin of the present houses.

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Mohunt's. Higher up stands the temple of Ambikā Bhowani. A householder dressed like a monk was seated there. In front of the goddess was a lighted lamp; the sacred fireplace close by was full of ashes. A piece of stone daubed with vermilion rested near and by lamp-light was worshipped with offerings of money.

At no great distance was the piece of water called the water-pot (*kamandulu*) of Dattatreya.[1] Round about it lay the settlement of the naked ascetics, called Nāgās. Sivanarayan saw four sādhus arrive there. Having made some mistake in describing themselves they were deprived of all their belongings and turned out of the place, according to the custom of the Nāgās, whose hospitality can be claimed by a sādhu visitor for a day and night upon giving a correct description of himself. Any mistake therein causes instant expulsion and forfeiture of goods. Constant complaints of Nāgā outrages were made to the Nawab of Junagar, whose rule extends over the Girnar Hills. For a time the Nawab refused to entertain them. Once he had the Nāgās arrested and brought before him. They confessed their misconduct, which they justified as fulfilling the injunction of the founder of their sect. The plea was rejected, and they were ordered to make restitutions and leave Girnar. The latter part of the order was disobeyed. The Nāgās kept to their usual haunts, of which the Nawab took no notice.

Sivanarayan visited the Chhattra of Gorakshanath[2] and the place of Kabir Dass[3] as he wandered over the hills. He found a few true saints amongst the Vaishnavas of the Ramanuja sect and one among the Aghoris—men whose whole being was surrendered to God and established on Him.

To frighten away people the ascetics have spread

[1] A noted sage said to have attained wonderful powers by the fervour of his austerities.

[2] The founder of a sect of ascetics, by whom he is deified.

[3] A Vaishnava religious teacher, by caste a weaver.

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a report that the Aghori saints kill and devour whomsoever they find there at night. But those that Sivanarayan met on this occasion were holy men of wisdom. Members of this sect would not hesitate to eat a corpse if driven to extremity for support of life. Some would do that even as a matter of religious training. But they would never kill a man for a cannibal feast.

Meeting some pilgrims in quest of holy saints, Sivanarayan told them that the same God dwelt in all things and all creatures. All men in ultimate reality were holy saints. "Whoso perceiveth not the ultimate reality is blind. Whoso perceiveth it, to whom the soul and the supreme soul are one and the unity of being manifest, is truly a saint. The sects are many, but the saints are few."

A little way beyond is the Temple of the Serowghis,[1] an enormous pile, looking like a fort. From this spot steps are cut into the side of the rock to meet the road to Junagar. Sivanarayan passed a few days by the side of these steps in a natural cave hidden by a dense jungle growth. In answer to enquiries he used to describe himself simply as a man. People shunned him in contempt, not finding on him the external marks of a professional ascetic. Sivanarayan sustained life upon the leaves of a neighbouring tree. None ministered to his wants.

To test the credulity of householders and ascetics Sivanarayan cleared a rectangular space in the jungle and daubed it well with mud. He placed a clean stone on each of its four corners and one in the middle. The stones were painted with wet brick-dust and named after different Hindu gods, and the spot was called "the five holy places." Sivanarayan scattered wild flowers on the stones and sat watching the scene in silence. Pilgrims flocked round with offerings of food and coins. Some

[1] A sect allied to the Jains.

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prostrated themselves, some asked for the names of the idols, and some remarked it was a holy shrine, miraculously come into existence. By nightfall one and a half maunds of grains and eight annas in money had collected there, which Sivanarayan made over to the keeper of a small grocery shop on the heights.

Shortly it came to the knowledge of the gentry at Junagar that a great sādhu in rags was observing a protracted fast on the hills. They sent him, by coolies, a large store of food. Sivanarayan wanted the coolies to carry back their loads, as he was going away directly. But they would not. At his request an ascetic took over the entire quantity and he departed for Dwarka, taking Junagar and Porbunder on the way.

CHAPTER V.

Dwarka—Whom do you worship?—Branded for Heaven—Narayana's Pool—Division of spoils — Hinglaz — Multan — Mosque against temple — Persecution of Hindus—Pax Britannica—A Vaishnava monk—The gods, a burden—Release from the gods.

The famous temple at Dwarka[1] enshrines a stone image of Krishna. The silver-sandalled feet of the chief pāndā betokened his rank.

"Show me Krishna," said Sivanarayan to him, and, a fee or offering of Rs. 2½ being demanded, continued: "If Krishna is a name for the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, what can we have to give Him? In his spiritual blindness man takes a stone image for his Maker, and in pride of existence offers to his god what he fancies his own—he, who cannot make the tiniest

[1] Dwarka was the home of Krishna and his family.

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blade of grass. You and your brother priests are constant in worshipping the image with prayers and recitals of holy texts, and yet your greed increases and blindness grows from day to day. What is the reason?"

"Have you," cried the priest in anger, "come to see the god or to give me wisdom? Who are you to instruct me? Make your offering and see the god or take yourself away."

"I have no money. Shall I never find God?"

"Never without money," said the pāndā-priest, whose thoughts had turned into the stone he worshipped.

"The god Krishna inside this temple is made of wood, metal, or earth. The material being available everywhere, to come to your temple is wholly unnecessary. Of what is your god made? Is He manifest (*sākāra*) or hidden (*nirākāra*)? If the former, the manifested Deity is present before all as the earth, water, fire, air, *ākāsa*, and sun and moon-light. Tell me of which of them is God. If you call the transcendent Deity Krishna, then where is He, how is He to be found, show Him to me?"

At these words of Sivanarayan the pāndās took counsel together and turned him out, lest he should corrupt the faith of the pilgrims. He went to the place close by where pilgrims were, for a fee, branded on the arm as a memento of their pilgrimage. The fees collected were divided between the Baroda State and the pāndās. Considering Sivanarayan's poverty they offered to brand him for the merest trifle, and promised him freedom from all spiritual penalty even if the funeral torch was not applied to his dead face in due form.

"What sin," asked Sivanarayan, "has the body committed that it should be punished with branding? Besides, what effect will it have on the soul? If branding led to salvation all branded cattle are already saved. Why do you drag others into the maze of error you are lost in yourselves? Whoso hath loving faith in the true

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lord Krishna, that is to say, in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, needeth no branding for his salvation. Such a one is inwardly branded with the wisdom of God. Those who have turned from Him desire this outward branding."

Crossing over to Cutch, Sivanarayan reached the holy pool of Narayan[1] at a distance of about 80 miles from the capital. Here the pilgrims are branded on the breast after a purificatory plunge in the sacred waters. The ceremony involves the payment of a fee to the pāndās.

On that day a pāndā had received from a certain pilgrim one pice more than his proper share. The others desired the pice to be turned into cowrie-shells and divided amongst those entitled to a share. This was resisted as inconvenient, and another mode of equalising shares was proposed and rejected. The dispute grew warm, and the illegitimate holder of the pice was left senseless with blows and robbed of all the money on him.

"Ye dwellers round this pool," said Sivanarayan, moved by the spectacle, "what have you gained by all your worship and ablutions? You are prepared for a pice to take the life of a fellow-creature. God, whose manifestation is light, is the true holy tank. Plunge into Him and secure eternal salvation. Branding is unnecessary. On His broad breast—the sky—the sun and moon are branded for ever. Let all men and women of high and low degrees receive on their hearts the brand of God, and all troubles will end."

Sivanarayan steamed over to Karachi and thence proceeded to Tatta in Sindh. In this town pilgrims obtain provisions and a guide for their long camel ride to the holy shrine of Hinglaz on the Mekran coast. The journey both ways takes from 12 to 14 days. The road passes through inhospitable jungles and tracts of sandy desert. From the few Moslem villages scattered on the

[1] A name of Vishnu.

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route the pilgrim's Hindu faith forbids the reception of food or drink, to the great suffering of the improvident devotee.

An ancient Moslem dame sits near a fireplace, built into a hollow in the earth. She keeps a lamp burning day and night against the arrival of pilgrims. After purificatory ablutions, in the manner prevalent at Amarnath, the devotee receives ashes from the fireplace to rub over himself. Then follows the ceremonial vision of the lighted lamp accompanied by money offerings. After baiting, commences the return march. The offerings collected at the shrine belong to the Mohunt of Tatta, portions being allowed, however, to the guides and the Moslem custodian of the shrine.

Sivanarayan's journey was solitary, apart from the pilgrim throng. He left the shrine and reached Rorhi Sakkar, passing through Hyderabad (Sindh). On a little island in the river Sātbhela, which flows past Sakkar, there is a small colony of sādhus, who drove him away as he did not bear the distinctive marks of their sect.

Arrived at Multan Sivanarayan saw a large mosque within the fort. Outside there is a Hindu temple enshrining images of Krishna, Pralhad,[1] and Sudām.[2] This temple was originally modest in size. But the Hindus commenced to rebuild it on a larger scale. The Mahomedans objected on the ground that the enlarged dimensions of the temple would reduce the comparative magnitude of their mosque.

"Your race," protested a Moslem deputation to the Hindu leaders, "is inferior to ours. Your place of worship must accordingly be inferior in size."

"So long," replied the Hindus, "as sovereignty was yours you ruled the land and built immense mosques.

[1] A Daitya or Titan prince, much persecuted for his devotion to Vishnu, of whom Krishna is reckoned an incarnation.

[2] One of the companions of Krishna's youth, spent among cowherds.

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Now that God has given us the money we too shall raise imposing places of worship."

The temple progressed towards completion. One day a riotous Moslem mob slaughtered kine on the spot and threw the meat near the images in the temple, beating back the Hindus and plundering the place. The Mohunt of the place was a lady, who saved her life and honour by hiding in a dark room. As the news spread, a large gathering of Hindus gave battle to a larger crowd of Mahomedans, and had the worst of the fight. The military had to be called out to quell the disturbance, and legal proceedings commenced in a British Court.

This incensed the then Nawab of Bhawalpore. Within his territories commenced a regular persecution of Hindus. Beef defiled Hindu homes and shops. The Hindu officials of the State left in consternation. Matters came to such a pass that the British Government had to interfere and threaten the Nawab with deportation and imprisonment—so the rumour went.

On the way from Multan a monk of the Ramanuja sect joined Sivanarayan in his wanderings. The monk carried on his shoulders a heavy bundle, containing, besides things for his personal use, idols of stone and metal, of considerable weight.

"Consider," said Sivanarayan in compassion, "O Mahātmā, with collected thoughts, whether you have entered a monastic order for the removal of your burdens or for adding to them. If the former, then why suffer under such a grievous burden? Would it not be better to keep just what you need?"

"My lord," said the monk, "I have here my wearing apparel and articles of daily use. Besides, my guru gave me many gods, and I have collected many good ones at the places I have visited. I must take them all to my guru's abode."

"It is," continued Sivanarayan, "no doubt praiseworthy

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of you to carry to your guru the best of what you collect in the course of your pilgrimage. But consider, what is it that you call 'I' and what is it you call God. What are you the worshipper and what the God worshipped? In the wide expanse of space, either within or outside you, what is there superior to yourself to be worshipped? It is right to worship that alone which is superior to yourself, so that by the wisdom, coming from the grace of that superior, you might attain to the supreme joy called salvation or Mukti. But what you are carrying on your shoulders is but metal and stone that God has created useful for your life on earth. Are these superior to you, or you to them? You have intelligence which discriminates between truth and falsehood. Hold fast to the truth and wisdom, and salvation will be yours."

"My lord," said the ascetic, "I worship God in this metal and stone, believing in His presence therein."

"O noble ascetic," said Sivanarayan, "if you can believe in God's presence in metal and stone and worship Him in inanimate objects, how is it you cannot believe in Him and worship Him in the living soul in your own breast. Why should He be absent from the soul in you while present in unconscious objects? Find Him in love within yourself."

"As I am an expression of God, so is the object called inanimate. What harm can there be, then, in worshipping Him in His inanimate expressions?"

"No doubt all that you see is His expression, and so are you. But ponder well. The water of the holy Ganges is the same substance as the water of the ditch. But ought I to ask you to drink ditch-water for that reason? Ditch-water will breed disease, while the water of the Ganges will remove your thirst and make you feel cheerful. Mud, ordure, and cooked rice are the same in substance. But should I for that reason tell you to eat either of the two first in preference to the last? The ignorant man, the thief, and the robber do not differ in

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the order of reality or substance from the great-souled, learned ascetic, but is the condition of the former class as desirable as of the latter? Consider further. According to the teachings of your scriptures the manifested or expressed God is ever present before you. The Vedas say that the sun is His eye, the moon His mind, the akāsā His head and breast, the air His life, the water His blood, and the earth His feet. Reflect. When God in His aspect of expression or manifestation is ever present before you, to whom are you to give worship, leaving Him aside? All the holy writings, while teaching meditation, have pointed out the Supreme Being, expressed as light, to be the proper object of meditation and mental rest. It behoves you, therefore, to turn to Him in love and reverence. By the fervour of that meditation, when you see yourself to be the same light as the object meditated on, then will you find everlasting, joyous rest in the all-comprehending Supreme Being. This all-powerful Being, manifested as light, is the world's Parent, Teacher, and Soul. Having abandoned Him and fastened your mind upon unreal, transitory appearances, you are wandering over the face of the earth, with a mind enfeebled by what it dwells on. Whatever be the name you bestow upon the recipient of your worship, that worship must be directed to the all-comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as light. The true substance of you and your God is one. Established on this thought, meditate upon that being expressed as light. Feel towards Him as child to parent, same and yet different, the object of love, veneration, and worship, though inwardly the same."

"Your words are true," said the ascetic; "another Paramhansa told me the same thing, but I could not accept his teaching. From your words the conviction comes to me that besides the Supreme Being, manifested as light, there is none else in existence. Having turned away from Him I am wandering, lost in error. If you

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would compassionately bestow your companionship on me the darkness will be lifted from my soul. In vain have I so long borne the burden of these gods of stone and metal."

"Believe," said Sivanarayan, "as God moves you from within."

"My lord," said the ascetic, "after much thought the conviction arises in my mind that I had better throw these gods into the water, except a small selection."

"Do as you feel prompted," was Sivanarayan's reply.

The ascetic preserved a few stone images that pleased his eye and prostrated himself before the Supreme Being, manifested as light.

"When the Supreme Being, manifested as light, is ever present everywhere," said the ascetic after a few days, "then why should I suffer under the weight of these images? I will hang them on the branch of this tree for anyone to take away who wishes."

In a little while the ascetic gave away all he had, except what was absolutely necessary for the journey.

"I bow down to you a thousand times," said he, addressing Sivanarayan; "you have saved me from the net that enmeshed me. Now give me your blessings that my thought may for ever lovingly rest on the Supreme Being, manifested as light."

"There is no good fortune beyond that," said Sivanarayan.

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CHAPTER VI.

Mussourie—The Sikh monastery—"My Lord the Book"—Etiquette of the monastery—Another Sikh monastery—The mysterious acceptance of offerings—The invisible hand—Jwalamukhi—Living fire—Local legends—Pushkar—Sāvitri and Gāyatri—Ajmere—Khwājā Sahib's tomb—Alla's grasp—Walkeswar—The cremation ground—The Pundit Jaliram—The Thakurbati.

It was raining at Mussourie. Sivanarayan found but slight shelter under a tree. A Sikh, seeing his plight, advised him to ask hospitality at some human habitation.

"I am an animal of the jungles," said Sivanarayan; "townsfolk will not take to me kindly. I have no place with them."

The Sikh promised him the ready hospitality of a monastery of that faith, near the Bazaar. Sivanarayan accompanied him and sat down in the place pointed out. After a while he lay down to rest his tired limbs. A sādhu remonstrated with him in strong language, as his feet pointed towards a saint's tomb. Sivanarayan changed his posture.

"Take away your feet," said the sādhu; "don't you see, you fellow, your feet are in the direction of the Granth Sahib."[1] Sivanarayan moved again.

"What a fool you are!" came again the voice of remonstrance; "don't you see, your feet are directly in the line of the Mohunt's state chair?" Sivanarayan turned round.

"Are you blind?" said the sādhu, angry and threatening; "don't you see the Granth Sahib's bed, on which he is laid at rest when the second quarter of the night has passed. Go away, you rascal."

"Tell me, brother," said Sivanarayan, "how am I to dispose of my feet. Am I to remain standing or to raise my feet towards the sky? In what direction do you lie down at night?"

[1] Literally, "My Lord the Book," the Sikh Scriptures.

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"Don't argue with me, you fellow," said the sādhu; "after the Granth Sahib is laid to rest on his bed we lie down with our feet in the direction in which the Granth Sahib is now seated."

"Very well," said Sivanarayan, "after you lie down I shall follow your example. You worship the invisible God, and yet you are unintelligent as the beast of the field. You never think in what things or places He is present and where absent. He is in the feet as also in the paper, ink, and cloth you call the Granth Sahib. He is in all places, high and low, and is all things. You would not allow a human frame, informed by the living soul, to lie at ease, but you must venerate a book made of paper, ink, and cloth, and a lump of clay, which once was the body of a man, and contemn the intelligence which rules all things. It is for this that the whole nation—prince and peasant, monk and layman—is destitute of strength and dependent in all things upon another, suffering untold miseries in consequence. And yet you do not understand the madness of spiritual pride in your hearts. There is no help for it. No one is master of himself. In the dark you cannot see, even though you have eyes. In spiritual darkness you can neither see nor understand. You know not God, the true guru, the true soul.

"A Moslem sect in Sindh bastinadoes the feet stretched out to the west, the direction of Mahomed's tomb. The Hindu bows his head before his idol. Many Christians uncover and bend the knee to buildings, called churches. Each sect praises its own practice and condemns that of the others, and all sects are in perpetual bondage to hate and contention, struggling to establish the superiority of each. Let all men consider: If the human body turned to clay and mortar and brick are to be worshipped as divine, then, as those substances are to be found everywhere, what is the use of worshipping them in any particular condition? You take a building, call it church, mosque, or temple,

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according to your faith, deem it holy and the rest unholy. And yet, all buildings are but earth. The Supreme Being, including in Himself the earth, is all-comprehending, complete, and manifested as light. But you neither know nor acknowledge Him. Is He not the ruler of all hearts, comprehending in Himself matter, force, the intelligent and unintelligent and the cause, complete within and without, and self-existent? Does He dwell only in buildings for which men imagine the names temple, mosque, and so forth? Is He non-existent elsewhere? Giving up all regard for particular forms and conditions, seek refuge in Him. He will remove all your errors and maintain you in supreme joy as joy itself."

Sivanarayan visited the establishment of another group of ascetics of the same order. There, before the Granth Sahib is a waterpot, half sunk in the earth. By a small hole at the bottom the pot communicates with a narrow covered channel. A smaller vessel of copper, placed on its top, has on its own lower end a cunning contrivance, which, by a suitable movement of the vessel, would shut and open, without attracting notice.

Devotees make offerings of sherbet and *halwa*[1] to the Granth Sahib. The sherbet is poured into the copper vessel, and, in the case of common devotees, disappears through the one below into the underground channel. If the devotee be rich, measures are taken to prevent the sherbet running out and the offerer is condemned as an impenitent sinner, who must, by money gifts to the Granth Sahib, propitiate Bābā Nānak[2] and obtain acceptance of his offering. Influenced by the gift, the sherbet is consumed and the empty copper vessel flourished before the faithful assembly. The acceptance of the *halwa* by Bābā Nānak is signified by the appearance on it of the impression of a hand, devoutly believed to belong to the

[1] A sweetened paste of flour.
[2] The founder of the Sikh sect.

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invisible saint. The time taken for the impression to appear varied according to the offerer's means. When the money gift reached its maximum, Bābā Nānak's hand, constructed of copper to the unbelieving eye, is secretly laid on the sweetened paste, to the great edification of the congregation.

The fraud was finally discovered by an intelligent Sikh of the name of Ram Sing, and the place closed. Referring to the author of this fraud a pious Sikh ascetic of the place said to Sivanarayan, "He had much religion, but no mercy for man."

Sivanarayan reached Jwalamukhi by the hill route. From the holy hearth inside the temple rose tongues of consecrated fire, receiving offerings made from all around. On the walls burned, as if from gas-burners, flames of various degrees of brilliancy. Feeble flames could also be seen at short distances from the inner and outer walls of the temple. Devotees stuck soft sweetmeats on the walls close to the flames to be slowly consumed. This phenomenon is described by ignorant piety as the living fire leaping on to the pilgrims' hands to receive offerings. None seemed to reflect that not only on this spot but all the world over fire receives and turns into its own nature all that is offered to it. It is the same fire that shines in the sky as the sun and moon. When he puts forth his strength the world burns in pain, and when he pours out as rain the vapours he sucks up from the ocean the world rejoices in the coolness thereof.

"It is a long story, sir," said the gentle pāndā, "and the events are many and ancient. The Emperor Aurangzeb and Moslem fanatics, like Mahomed Fakir, destroyed our holy images at many a celebrated shrine. They burned our scriptures, tore our sacred threads to pieces, and made Moslems of Brahmins. The Viswanath image of Benares was broken into four parts; one was thrown into a neighbouring well, and the rest went to form steps

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of a mosque for Moslem worshippers' shoes to rest on. They said the Hindu had no powerful or real God, but merely helpless images, made by the hands of man. Some one said to them that the only Hindu god, visible and powerful, was the burning flame at Jwalamukhi. They decided to investigate and ascertain the truth. Here they found a real flame of fire, rising heavenwards from the earth. Suspecting fraud, they dug up the earth at the foot of the flame without being able to put it out. The test was varied. A plate of iron was placed over the flame, and still it burned. Through a layer of seven iron plates the flame penetrated and appeared on the top. They acknowledged the god and built a large temple in the place of the small one then in existence, and gilded it with gold down to where the hands of man could reach."

"Why need a man," said Sivanarayan, "come to Jwalamukhi to see fire, which is everywhere to be seen? The fire within you digests the food which he cooks in your kitchen. The great fire, called sun and moon, burns without fuel, night and day. If you see that fire and feel within you Him who is that fire, your joy will know no end."

Finding holy places all of a type, Sivanarayan turned away from the difficult road to Badrinath and arrived at Pushkar in Rajputana. On the west of the holy tank, in which the pilgrims observe the ritual of ablution, rise two hillocks, surmounted respectively by the temples of Sāvitri and Gāyatri. The pilgrims rely on these goddesses for the removal of their sins and sorrows. Sivanarayan explained to them that according to the true import of the scriptures the manifested aspect of God was the light called the sun, of which Sāvitri is but an imagined name. Another form of the sun, called the moon, is the light indicated by the name Gāyatri. God, manifested as the light, will take away the world's burden of sin and suffering. Man wanders in error, not knowing Him, the true God.

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At Ajmere Sivanarayan saw, adjoining a mosque, the tomb of a Mahomedan saint, Khwājā Sahib. The tomb was decked out in all the bravery of lanterns and chandeliers. Hindus and Moslems flocked to the tomb, attracted by its miracle-working reputation. Touts were employed to secure visitors from amongst the pilgrims to Pushkar.

An old fakir calls upon the visitor to put his hand inside the chamber of the tomb, promising the fulfilment of all his desires. As soon as the hand disappears through the opening it is grasped by an unseen hand and a pull is felt. In the case of women visitors especially the old fakir forbids all attempt to draw away the hand, as it is the Almighty who holds it from within. "Your hand is in God's grasp," says the fakir; "you will get your heart's desire. Be prompt in the payment of a fee of Rs. $1\frac{1}{4}$ for the privilege of having your hand held and a like amount for its release." After some cheapening, when the fee is agreed on the confederate in the tomb lets the hand go.

Sivanarayan remonstrated with the guardian of the tomb and asked him to be content with what the visitor willingly paid.

"You are a fakir yourself," he said, "what have you to do with these things? You have seen what there is to see. Now go." His parting was sped by a garland of flowers being hung round his neck and cut flowers put in his hands. Some Mahomedan gentlemen of the neighbourhood, having heard this account, promised to enquire into the matter and stop all fraudulent practice.

On his way to Bombay Sivanarayan passed through Ahmedabad and Surat. Arrived at Walkeswar, a suburban village near Bombay, he proceeded to the cremation ground by the sea-shore. He lay down on a monumental stone, whereon was inscribed the name the ashes bore in life, and covered himself head to foot with the sheet of cloth he was wearing. Three days

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passed, but nobody took any notice of him. Those who brought their dead for the last rite took him to be a lunatic.

Hard by stood a *thakurbati* or idol-house, established by wealthy Marwaris. Some sādhus of the Ramanuja sect were in residence there. Coming in and going out they saw him from a distance, and avoided him as an unclean *murdāfarāsh*.[1]

The founder of the idol-house intended it to be used as a resting-place for travelling ascetics. A pundit of the name of Jāliram was in charge, and it was a part of his duties to entertain the ascetic guests his search could discover in the country-side. Happening upon Sivanarayan one day, he made him a profound bow of reverence.

"Whom are you saluting?" asked Sivanarayan, returning his greetings.

"You," said the pundit.

"Who am I that you salute me?"

"I am of the worst of mankind, in constant suffering from attachment to worldly objects of enjoyment. I know not what in reality I am or God is. How shall I know who you really are? This only I know, that you are a mahātmā, a man of renunciation, one whom God has known and received. With such knowledge have I saluted you."

"You," said Sivanarayan, "need feel no perplexity. The being that you are I am."

"The scriptures say so, no doubt. But when by the practice of devotion, such as yours, one's thoughts are established on what in reality is—the Swarupa—the soul's end is consummated."

"Even if your thoughts lack establishment on reality, still you are in reality what you are. There is nothing to trouble you."

[1] A public assistant at cremation whose touch is defilement.

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"Grant me the favour of informing me how long you have been here and what arrangements are made about you. Has anybody seen you?"

"I have been here for three days. Many people have seen, but nobody has spoken to, me."

"Order me what food you want, I shall bring it here, or come with me to the thakurbati, where there is suitable accommodation for such as you, as long as it is their pleasure to stay. Many men of wealth and wisdom will come to see your feet."[1]

"I have no concern with men of wealth and learning. Nothing need be said about me to anyone. If you feel moved you could send here something for me to eat."

"I could do that or bring it here myself. But being burning ground, people feel a repugnance about coming here. Be pleased to accompany me to the thakurbati."

Sivanarayan rested at the idol-house after the meal. Merchants of the pundit's acquaintance came to see him there. Before departure they invited him to sanctify their places of abode with the dust of his feet.

"It is an error to think of your dwellings otherwise than as holy," said Sivanarayan, and responded to the invitations.

One of his visits was to the house of the Brahmin Jey Kissen, a celebrated pundit of that place, at which some important questions were discussed.[2]

During his stay a Marwari merchant named Jwahir Mull, one of the founders of the idol-house, became much attracted by Sivanarayan's teachings and attached to him personally.

[1] A reverential way of saying "you."
[2] See Appendix I.

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CHAPTER VII.

The pundit — The outcaste — A transformation — The honoured guest — A parable—Siva in a mortal form—The devotee—The hypocrite—The god unmasked—Return to Walkeswar—Under police suspicion—A holy Lothario — The Dog-god — The Nizam's Hyderabad — The city Superintendent — Balaji — Rangoji — To Madras — Rameswaram — The temple—Temple-worship—Rationale of worship—The silent saint—Rama's Bridge—The three *lingas*—The "Limbs of Virāt"—The eight forms of Siva—The evil of linga-worship as practised.

Proceeding towards the sacred river Godavery, Sivanarayan heard of a Brahmin who dwelt close by and was said to be well versed in the Vedas and all the allied branches of learning. He was reputed to be the very embodiment of peace and devoted to the service of paramhansas and other holy ascetics. The wanderer came to his house travel-stained, in tatters and unshorn. Some of the householders were worshipping in the temple of Siva attached to the dwelling, some making their daily offerings in the fire, while others were studying the Vedas, seated in front of the house.

"Who are you," shouted the pundit annoyed, "whence have you come, what is your business here, what caste are you?"

"I am," said the stranger, "the lowest outcaste, none lower than myself."

"How dare you, a low-caste fellow, approach the temple of Siva? The god has become desecrated and the place defiled. Away you go at once."

"Whatever," said the unbidden guest, "is in its nature pure remains pure to the end; no accident can affect its purity. It is the same about the impure. If you feel, however, that my presence has defiled the temple, the god, and the neighbourhood, there is cow-dung in your house to wash away the pollution. May my offence be forgiven."

"Don't teach me wisdom. Away with yourself," raged

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the pundit. Sivanarayan left, and purificatory ceremonies were duly performed.

On the side of a small feeder of the Godavery, before a fire, sat a Brahamachāri, the disciple of a Mahātmā of Jeypore. He had done some personal service to Sivanarayan on the way. Sivanarayan, after a shave and a river bath, put on the dyed loin-cloth supplied by the Brahamachāri. He rubbed himself all over with ashes, painted three lines on his forehead in the form known as *tripundra*, and hung from his neck and arms a few rosaries of *rudrāksha* beads. Sandals on feet and the ascetic's begging-bowl in hand, repeating the hallowed formula "Sivoham" (I am Siva), he entered the pundit's temple. The whole assembly stood up in reverence and bowed low. With joined palms they invited him to a seat and thanked their stars for the presence of such a great Mahātmā in their midst.

"O thou source of mercy," said the pundit, "to what order of life dost thou belong, what rules dost thou observe in eating, and what food is acceptable to thee? Deign to enlighten us in these matters, and we shall follow thy guidance."

"I am," replied Sivanarayan, "a sannyāsi. The rules I observe in eating require my food to be prepared by an unmarried child, under 12 years of age, who should, with his right hand alone, draw water from the well and cook my food in melted butter in a cowhouse. The least deviation from this course renders the food unfit for my use. I eat only once in a day and night, and live upon water alone, if the rules are not observed."

"Thou art," said the pundit, "a Mahātmā amongst sannyāsis, the preceptor of the whole world. Rest thou a while and thy food will be ready."

No boy or girl would undertake the task under the conditions laid down. The pundit feared a breach of his duties as a householder, and gave a piteous expression to

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his fears. One boy said he could with the right hand alone draw water from the well, knead the flour into dough, but could not without the other hand use the rolling-pin to flatten the dough-ball into the cakes called *puris* and fry them. At last a boy offered to do what was required, if rewarded with a rupee's worth of sweetmeats. The pundit accepted the terms.

Sivanarayan sat to meal with the pundit and his household. He complained the rules had not been strictly followed, and that he must purify the food by repeating holy texts. The juvenile cook was sent for and finally persuaded to admit his fault. People said in wonder that the secret of no heart was hidden from Sivanarayan. The meal over, the company assembled in the outer apartments.

"You are," said Sivanarayan, "a learned pundit, well versed in the Vedas and other scriptures. Now tell me what good comes of scriptural studies. What thing or reality is it you call pundit, sannyāsi, or paramhansa? Are these names of forms or expressions, or do they transcend form? Is paramhansa the name of bones, flesh, filth, the senses, and so forth, or is it the name of wooden sandals, rosary of beads, ashes, and brow-marks? Explain this to me."

"My lord," said the pundit, "from scriptural studies come the discrimination of the real from the unreal, the recognition of the real or truth as such, steadfast adherence to the truth, and dissuasion from the unreal or falsehood. Those studies generate an equal regard for all creatures, right apprehension of temporal and spiritual duties, and the means of performing those duties properly, together with the power to use those means. The possession of these characteristics makes the pundit and forms the true end of scriptural learning. Concerning the sannyāsis, of whom the paramhansa is the efflorescence, it is said: "The brown robe does not make *sannyās*

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(renunciation), the abandonment of self-identifying regard for the body is true *sannyās*. The unalterable conviction that I am not the body but the all-comprehending spirit is the characteristic mark of *sannyās*."

"If," said Sivanarayan, "these be your thoughts, O pundit, then why did you drive away the Mahātmā in rags who visited you yesterday? And why do you show respect to me, looking at the ashes on my body and the beads on my arms?"

"That fellow," cried the pundit, "was an outcaste, and you a Mahātmā."

"Should you," said Sivanarayan, "believe everything you are told? If a man tells you he is the creator of God should you believe him respectfully? What would be the use of your Vedic learning if you did? It was I who then told you I was an outcaste, and now having changed the appearance of my body—the disguise worn by the soul—I say 'Sivoham.' You despised me then because in your sight my external appearance was contemptible, and now, because that appearance is different, you respect me as your guru. Fie on your punditship! The true paramhansa has realised the unity of God and soul, his nature is the nature of God. By what mark shall you know him? You are troubling the lives of yourselves and others about purity and impurity, and yet you know not that the Supreme Spirit, manifested as light, is purity itself and nowise can He become impure. Abandoning all selfish impulses, receive the truth with the help of a parable I am going to tell you.

"A man of great learning, but devoid of real experience of God, approached for instruction a master enjoying the beatific vision. He was bidden to find whatever was worse than himself. Pursuing his quest he happened upon his own excrement and deemed himself successful. 'Wretch!' cried the loathsome object, reading his thoughts, 'touch me not. I was offered in a golden

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bowl for the delectation of the gods; you received me as holy, and I nourished you. Contact with you has reduced me, your benefactor, to the condition you see, and you are returning hatred for the good you have received from me. Far from appreciating the good in your benefactor it seems your part to proclaim what in him is not good. Shame on your understanding! You are ungrateful. It is useless to do good to the likes of you. You are regardless of the good you get from your benefactor. You praise or blame according to external appearances and other similar qualities. You are repelled by me, your benefactor, because of the condition I am in. If for your good the Supreme Spirit manifests Himself in a lowly form you will turn away from Him because His form is not grand in your sight. This is the reason why God, who is self-manifest, is not manifest to you. If in mercy He approaches to touch your heart, you drive Him away with blows. You have lost your discernment completely. When by contact with you the food of the gods is turned into foul filth how much fouler are you!'

"'Now,' said the master when the disciple in shame and disgust related his experience, 'now that your pride has been shattered, God is not far away from you. Seek refuge in Him, the all-comprehending light, the world's parent, teacher, and soul. He is the ruler of hearts, and by inward prompting He will discover to you all that is hidden and remain what He is, comprehending you and all things, visible and invisible, one and indivisible, self-manifest. He or you, transcending purity and impurity, is or are, according to difference of conditions, pure or impure.'"

"It is true, my lord," said the pundit when the parable ended, "the intoxication of worldly science is blinding. It is hard indeed to understand the glories of God. I crave forgiveness for my offence."

"Ask forgiveness of God and rest in peace and sobriety,

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reflecting upon the real nature of the Forgiver and the forgiven."

Returning to the owner his holy habit Sivanarayan went his way. In an extensive field he happened upon four persons, holy sannyāsis to look at. Round the head of the chief was coiled a great length of matted hair. They met a simple-minded country man. The subordinate members of the group took him aside and announced to him tidings of marvellous import.

"Behold," said they, "the Lord Siva. The holy being with the coils of matted hair is Mahādeva[1] himself, disporting a human form. Moved by great pity we reveal to you the divine secret. Prostrate yourself at his feet and he will grant your heart's desire."

The man of transparent simplicity did as he was told, and received on his hand a drop of water wrung out of the mighty god's hair.

"This drop of Ganges[2] water," said the supernatural being, "will secure to you all that is good. Great is your good fortune that you have set eyes on me. Obey those who have procured you this blessed vision."

Thus exhorted, the mortal favoured of the gods was led a little way apart and was advised by one of his instructors to place all his ready cash on Siva's feet to furnish forth a *ganjā* debauch. Following the disinterested advice, the rustic was rewarded by a slap on the back from Siva's own hand and an assurance from Siva's own lips of a future translation to Kailas.

The favoured worshipper of Siva, meeting a neighbour who was attending to some urgent requirements of his own in an unobserved part of the field, narrated to him the story of his own exceeding good fortune. In emulation, no doubt, of his interlocutor's piety, he prostrated himself before him of the matted locks, and,

[1] Literally, the great god, a name of Siva.
[2] It will be remembered that in Kailas mother Ganges dwells in Siva's hair.

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expressing grief at his want of present means to do the great god fitting reverence, insistently prayed for the favour of being accompanied to the village, where the requisite means could be procured. What god was ever proof against the fervour of prayer? The whole party found their way to the village modi's shop. But mysterious are the iniquities of the human heart. The majesty of the Lord of Kailas, instead of attracting worship, drew upon himself the assiduous attentions of the graceless police. The holy visitants of earth were unmasked and found to be members of a wandering gipsy (*bedia*) gang. The glorious matted locks were but rough wool, fixed with bael gum,[1] and calculated to retain moisture for a long time. This impious worshipper had met with Siva in a mortal form once before.[2]

In the course of his wanderings Sivanarayan returned to Walkeswar and stayed four days there. He made preparations for a journey to Rameswaram through the Tamil country. His old acquaintance Jwahar Mull, to save such a long journey on foot, purchased for him a railway ticket to a station in the Tamil country, and pressed upon him a money present upon the ground that not being in monkish habit he would want the consideration shown to an ascetic. The money was refused, but he was persuaded to start in a long coat which Jwahar Mull procured for him.

Just about that time a sannyāsi had run away with a merchant's daughter and her jewels, worth Rs. 10,000 to 12,000. The descriptive roll and authority for arrest of the holy Lothario had been telegraphed all along the railway line. At a station about 120 miles from Bombay the police came upon Sivanarayan in the search for the girl-stealer, who, it so happened, had the same name.

[1] The Indian wood-apple.
[2] Other such instances of imposture within Sivanarayan's experience are collected in Appendix II.

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This identity of names aroused suspicion, and he had to leave the train. In accompanying the police he remarked that all places to him were the same, as it was desirable that men in different places should have opportunities for the removal of their errors.

A crowd collected round him on the platform, and the European Inspector had no doubt of his being the person wanted. The guard in charge of the train spoke to his having been seen off at Bombay by persons of position and respectability. But the suspicions of the police were not allayed until it was found that he did not answer the tardily produced descriptive roll. Sivanarayan was then allowed to resume his seat, and the train steamed off.

The temple of the Dog-god stands on the river about eight miles from the nearest railway station. The holy image inside is known as the god Vitthal, which means a dog. Four gates guarded by pāndās allow access to the inner enclosure, which again has four gates similarly guarded. Admission fee being levied at the gates, the pilgrim approaches the temple, where butter with candied sugar is offered to the god. The temple is infested by expert cutpurses. The loss is usually discovered by the victim on his return to the bazaar. On complaints being made to the pāndās they attribute the loss to the loser's sins, for the expiation of which further money gifts to the god are recommended.

"When," said one of the losers to his priestly counsellor, "when a visit to the shrine and the god did not remove my sins, how would a money gift succeed where such holy agencies have failed?"

Leaving the pāndā speechless the unfortunate victim of holy zeal had to beg his way home.

Hyderabad in the Nizam's State led Sivanarayan to reflect upon the absence of a whole-hearted desire on the part of the rulers for their subjects' good. Revenue was all that they wanted for lavish expenditure on ostentatious display.

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"Are you," enquired of him the City Superintendent, a State official, "are you a Hindu or a Mahomedan fakir?"

"Is fakirhood the exclusive property of the Hindu or the Mahomedan?" was the reply.

"Were you born a Hindu or a Mahomedan—this is what I want to know?"

"True fakir is he from whom all personal motives (*fikir*) have departed and who has God alone left to him. If he thinks of himself as a Hindu or a Mahomedan he is neither a fakir nor a Mahātmā."

"Consider this, sir," said the official, "I am a Mahomedan, I eat beef. May you eat that?"

"What merit is there whether a man does or does not eat beef? If there were merit in eating beef it would belong equally to the dog, the jackal, and the tiger. Each creature lives upon its God-appointed meat. Merit there is none."

"But the Hindu would not eat beef, he looks on it with abhorrence."

"The same is the case with pork among the Mahomedans. But what does it matter? God has created all creatures out of the same substance. The cow and the hog are equally made of flesh, blood, bones, and so forth. Both are creatures of God; then why should the eating of the one be recommended and of the other reprobated?

"Such is the rule of our religion. There is a curse upon that creature. The very name is so accursed that one taking it must cry aloud, 'Toba! Toba!'"[1]

"That is so. What one body of men curse another give its blessings to."

"It is true all creatures are equally made of flesh and blood. I do not know for what reasons swine's flesh is forbidden to Mahomedans."

[1] "I repent, I repent."

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"But on reflection you will find either all should be forbidden or none. All creatures feel equally the pain of having their throats cut."

"What can I do, my lord, such is the tradition that has come down to us?"

He offered to pay Sivanarayan's railway fare to Rameswaram and requested a visit on the return journey. The wanderer declined to receive money, but accepted refreshments proffered at a Hindu confectionery shop. The Superintendent sent a constable with him to the railway station.

Sivanarayan visited the temple of Bālāji, situated on a hill close by a settlement of sādhus of the Ramanuja sect, and passed on to the temple of Rangoji, in which other gods of metal are enshrined beside the principal one named. For a consideration the pāndās place on the pilgrim's head Rangoji's silver crown, but Sivanarayan being penniless was not offered that honour.[1]

Arrived at Madras, Sivanarayan discovered that the merchant Jwahar Mull had sewn on his coat silver and paper money to the amount of Rs. 40. This he distributed among the poor of different places and proceeded on his wanderings.

The temple at Rameswaram is an enormous pile of buildings. A large number of images—Rama, Sita, Sivalingam—made of stone and the eight metals,[2] were enshrined within. The interior of the temple is dark, and the pilgrims are shown the holy objects by artificial light. It is prohibited to touch the images or approach them too near. Induced by large gifts the pāndās bring out by night the *lingam* wrapped up in a piece of cloth, and in secret expose it to the reverent gaze of the rich pilgrim. But under no pretence must it be touched.

[1] These two gods are forms of Vishnu.

[2] An alloy of the eight metals reckoned by Hindus, viz., gold, silver, brass, bell-metal, copper, tin, iron, and lead.

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The pilgrim desirous of pouring water on Siva's head must do it vicariously through the pāndā, who must be suitably rewarded, the least fee being Rs. 1¼. The pāndās think only of their own gain; they never consider how the poor wretch who has begged his way for a thousand miles would return home.

"You," said Sivanarayan to the pāndās, "who would not give a cup of water to the thirsty stranger at your door, although he is the true Siva, the name Siva being one out of many bestowed on him by man's imagination—who have no waters of love to pour upon Siva, visible as the light, are acquiring merit by pouring water over inanimate pieces of metal and stone."

What *dharma* (religious duties) have you adopted?" questioned him the chief pāndā, by name Jagannath.

"What is it that you call *dharma*?"

"*Dharma* is merely a word. He who is the real or eternal Being—the truth—is *dharma*. To establish the mind on truth and to regulate the speech by truth is *dharma*."

"If you know this, then why do you worship images of metal and stone, calling one Rama, another Siva, and so forth? Where do you find Rama and where Siva in this temple? Is the clay, metal, or stone Siva or Rama? If any of these substances be Siva and Rama, what, then, is the use of a pilgrimage to this spot, since those substances, call them Siva or Rama, are everywhere to be found? Besides, why should not, then, man, who being gifted with intelligence is superior to those substances, be worshipped as Siva and Rama? What use is there in worshipping images fashioned out of inanimate substances? Is not, then, God worshipped when intelligence, that is man himself, is worshipped, since God is omnipresent and the ruler of all hearts?"

"There is," said Jagannath, "no mistake in what you say. It is wholly true. But men accept not truth nor reverence it. Untruth and deceit are always accepted

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with them. Consider this. If I ask a rich man for assistance to maintain my family, he would either refuse or having given once will seek to recover his gift with interest. But the holy images located in this temple attract pilgrims with rich gifts from great distances. They accomplish the journey at great trouble and expense, and consider themselves amply rewarded by a sight of the images and the permission to make gifts of money and rich garments. The gods of stone do not need these offerings, they come useful to us. The holy sages have established these institutions so that poor people like ourselves may be maintained at the expense of the rich ; else why need we practise deceit ? "

Jagannath persuaded Sivanarayan to accept his hospitality, and made proper arrangements for his comfort and convenience.

On the sea-shore, in the midst of a jungle, there is a building called " Rama's Window." [1] It is two-storeyed, open on all sides, and about two miles from the Rameswaram temple. Close by was the *āsan* [2] or seat of the silent saint. People said he was a perfect being, who neither ate nor drank and had none of the physical needs of man, in short was god-like. All visitors to " Rama's Window " laid before him offerings of money after prostrations. The silent saint sat as a stone. During a lull in the visit of pilgrims the money placed before the saint would disappear all but a few pice, scattered in disorder. The sight of the money prompted similar offerings from those who came after. One of the pāndās proclaimed his sanctity before pilgrim assemblies and extolled the merit of making money-offerings before him.

One night when the silent saint, bathed and purified, was digging out from underneath his *āsan* some unleavened

[1] Ram Jhorokha.
[2] A piece of rough cloth or skin spread on the bare ground for an ascetic to rest on.

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bread called *chapātis* Sivanarayan drew near and coughed to attract his attention. The startled saint by signs invited him to share in the frugal repast. Accustomed to one meal a day, Sivanarayan at first declined the proffered hospitality, but had to yield to the saint's persistent invitation which a fear of exposure evidently prompted.

"If you," said Sivanarayan, "have taken the vow of silence it only prohibits speaking to laymen and not to me. It must be inconvenient and troublesome for you to converse by signs alone."

"True," said the man of silence, "but this is the only safeguard against being drawn into vain and empty talk. If the common people should believe that I ate and drank like any of them they would cease to respect me."

"That is so. But God Himself must eat and drink if He takes a human form. This body is made of food and drink. While there is form there must be eating and drinking. In the formless condition alone they are not. The fire, when active, must have fuel, but not when it has become quiescent and disappeared. So long as you are in this body you must eat and drink to support life. There is no shame or disgrace in it. Have your meal, and have no anxiety as to consequences."

Sivanarayan reassured him, and was shown the hole under the saint's seat where the money offered was stored for division with the pāndā who spread his fame. The pāndā's gift of food was also concealed in that hole.

Where Rama is said to have built his bridge to Lanka or Ceylon Sivanarayan found stones of different sizes scattered on all sides, but nothing to indicate the remains of a bridge. The pāndās, however, showed the stones as parts of Rama's marvellous bridge. Some reefs in the sea were also pointed out as the bridge that was. Pilgrims are urged with zealous persistency to worship the Sivalingam at Rameswaram.

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"What wonder is there," said Sivanarayan to the pāndās, "in Rama's having crossed the sea over the bridge his followers built? Consider how many worlds and systems of worlds God has hung up in empty space. By His power clouds are maintained in place without support and again scattered as rain. Supposing God in His inscrutable purpose assumed a human body and caused the seven seas to freeze into bridges, what would there be to wonder at? You all can see by His laws ordinary mortals are building bridges, running engines, and performing mechanical marvels such as none dreamed of before. Take your thoughts away from such things, and build in the ocean of mind bridges of salvation with stones of patience and the mortar of contentment. Take to your bosoms Sita the Light, called Truth, slaying the Rāvana of ignorance with the arrow of wisdom, and joy will be yours, now and for ever.

"The scriptures speak of three different *lingas* (literally, characteristics) of the Supreme Being, manifested as light and called by you Siva, namely, the gross or matter, the subtle or force and life, and the cause or substance. The last-mentioned *linga* is formless and attributeless, beyond the reach of mind and speech; the subtle *linga* is the light—sun and moon—which form the twice five faculties of sensation and action; and lastly, the gross *linga* is the totality of physical objects, including the physical bodies of all creatures. The gross *linga*, that is creatures, will disappear in the subtle or light, and the light will rest in the formless, attributeless cause. These are the *lingas* of Siva or God as declared by the scriptures. The different forms or 'limbs' of Virāt or All constitute the eight forms or *murtis* of Siva. As witness the *mantras* or formulæ of Siva-worship:—*Kshiti Murtay Bhavay namah* (Salutation to Siva under the name of Bhava in the form of the Earth), and so forth. Earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, sun, and egotism are the eight forms of Siva. Besides

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these no other form of Siva is, was, or can be. Where, then, is the *linga* which you and your women-folk worship, made of earth, stone, or metal? It cannot be in the formless and attributeless, and in expression or manifestation all that is or can be are the five elements, moon, sun, and egotism. The *linga* you worship is not to be found amongst these. It is seen only in the physical bodies of creatures. Do you maintain that the Vedas and other scriptures enjoin the worship of a limb of men and beasts? In the scriptures it is repeatedly laid down that as is the object worshipped so becomes the worshipper with his character, hopes, and aspirations. It is to this worship amongst the Aryan Hindus that the evil generated by the passion of lust is due. Even in dreams men and women are unable to escape from the thraldom of that passion, which follows the victim through all the consequences of a feeble body and mind. Because you have turned away from the worship of the true *linga* of God you meet at every turn with infamy and disgrace."

CHAPTER VIII.

Through Tamil and Telugu lands—The Raja of Tanjore—Jagannath—Two pāndās—Sanctity of the god—Suspension of caste-rules—The dwarf in the car—Fever and fasting of the god—His visit to his maternal aunt—Devices to repaint the figure in secret—The mystery of uncooked rice—The Zemindar of Nadigram—Birth and marriage of fire—Disputes as to ceremonial—Explanation.

Sivanarayan, travel-stained and meanly clad, was contemptuously driven away from every temple or house in the Tamil country that he approached for food. The treatment he received at the hands of Telugu pundits

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was no different. "Whence have you come, what do you want?" would ask the pundit.

"I am from Rameswaram on the way to Jagannath," would be the reply.

"What caste are you?"

Sivanarayan would not answer the question at all, or describe himself as belonging to the lowest caste, and the interview would invariably end with a peremptory command to go away.

These pundits and their followers made much of *āchāra* (religionism) and little of *vichāra* (spiritual discrimination). They were always busy in preserving the ceremonial cleanliness of their bodies and clothing and articles of use; their ceremonial baths were frequent. The accidental use of a bathing-place or ghat by a sūdra rendered it unfit for them to resort to without purificatory ceremonies, in which cow-dung played a conspicuous part. Even a Brahmin not observing their minute and elaborate ritual of cleanliness was an outcaste in their eyes. Sivanarayan said to them in season and out of season: "Without purity of heart and steadfast attachment to God, manifested as light and the parent, teacher, and soul of all, the sacred lore of the Vedas and the subordinate scriptures is as nothing."

At the Raja of Tanjore's palace gate Sivanarayan was told by a Moslem sentry that the hour for the midday meal had passed. But he offered his own hospitality if his religion would not make it unacceptable. The offer was accepted. A Hindu boy brought him some uncooked pressed rice and water. The Raja, through a window, observed him at his humble repast, and sent out a servant to inquire. Apprised of the fact he ran out to Sivanarayan, distressed, barefooted, and clad in a single piece of cloth. He expressed his concern that one coming to his palace had to fast up to such a late hour of the day. A meal was improvised in the Raja's presence.

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"In this hot weather," said the Raja at the end of the meal, "how is it, my lord, that you wander about barefooted? A pair of shoes was bought for me yesterday which I have not yet used. I shall be glad to be permitted to offer them to you, together with some wearing apparel. Whence have you come?"

"I am coming from the North. What I have is all that I need. I do not wear shoes, and yet I am under no restriction against wearing them."

"How have you travelled on foot such a long distance? If you would be pleased to tell me where you want to go I shall arrange for a railway ticket."

"I must journey on foot, observing the condition of the people."

"I believe you are King Janaka, and bless my destiny that I have seen you. I shall talk to you further after you have rested."

The Mahomedan sentry received an increase of pay, and Sivanarayan was taken to an upper chamber to rest. In a little while he went out for a walk and never returned. He came to Jagannath by keeping to the sea-coast.

Arrived at Jagannath, Sivanarayan found the great gate of the temple closed. Without stood the pilgrim crowd, to whom admission through a wicket was refused without a special fee. Sivanarayan would not be stopped, and passed through the wicket without paying the fee. The priestly extortioner shouted abuse after him and raised the cry that a madman had gained admission. In the confusion Sivanarayan found his way to the idol-room and stood in front of the images. The uproar drew around him a crowd of pāndās, of whom one asked him gently who he was.

"Listen," said he, "collectedly and with sobriety: you ask me who I am. Have you obtained a firm conviction touching your true self? Have you ascertained without

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doubt that you are this or that substance or caste? What is the substance or reality you call caste? Before you were born what was your name, your father's name and residence."

"My lord," said the pāndā, "if you are a sannyāsi or paramhansa, I am the special pāndā of your class."

"What is it that you call sannyāsi or paramhansa? Of what condition is that the name? For one in that condition does a pāndā exist in this wide world?"

"My lord," said the pāndā, bowing down with joined palms, "that name is imagined of him in whom, owing to the intimate union of the soul with the Supreme Soul, the all is seen as one, who feels 'there is none else beside me.' For such a one pāndā there is none. All that you see here are imagined by man for our support. Blessed is my destiny that I have seen you. To recognise one in your condition is indeed difficult."

"Have you," asked another pāndā who met him later, "have you ceremonially seen Jagannath? If not, present before the god your offerings of money and food, and distribute gifts in his name. Tell me how much you will give in money and how much in food?"

"What have I to give?" said Sivanarayan; "even shell-money I have none: what gifts am I to make?"

"You rogue," said the pāndā, "have you come empty-handed to see Jagannath? Your name and the names of your ancestors will be recorded in the temple books only if you make money gifts, and then only will the god know of your pilgrimage in his honour."

Having learned that Sivanarayan's earthly belongings consisted in the sheet of cloth wrapped round his body, the pāndā advised him to sell it and make over to him the proceeds in the god's name.

"You are," said Sivanarayan, "completely destitute of mercy for the penniless pilgrim. Following your advice I must strip myself naked, selling this piece of rag for

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a few pieces of copper to furnish the requisite fee to live in the remembrance of the world's Lord.[1] But does he not dwell in all hearts? What can you or I give him? He gives to all what they have. Speak the truth. This is but a device for your own gain. Who and what substance is it that you call Jagannath? Is he formless, attributeless, or has he any form and attribute? If the former, he cannot be minded by the mind or spoken by speech. If the latter, he must be perceptible. In what form—as what—is he present? The all-comprehending Supreme Being in the latter aspect is present before you as earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, and sun. According to the Vedas the all-comprehending God or Vishnu is present in these seven forms which are said to be 'His limbs.' The sun is His eye of wisdom, the moon his mind, and so forth. Which of these is and which are not Jagannath? He, whose name is Jagannath or the world's Lord, is one and all-comprehending and present within all things and every creature. Of the all-comprehending supreme spirit, the teacher of all, Jagannath is an imagined name."

"He," said the pāndā, "is present within the temple in the form of an image."

"Keep collected," said Sivanarayan; "consider and tell me who has created your body with all its limbs? Which 'god' is superior, your body, or the Supreme Being, manifested as light, the maker of your body? Say what is true, don't suppress it out of self-interest. Who has made the temple and the image in it?"

"The temple must have been built by man and the image by a carpenter, with the wood of *neem* and *bael* trees. Every twelve years a new image is made."

"Who then ought to be worshipped as superior—the wooden image or the carpenter who made it?"

"The carpenter. But as a matter of fact, nobody

[1] The literal meaning of Jagannath.

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worships the image of wood. There is a hole in it and a *Sālgrām*[1] god is placed in the hole. That god is worshipped."

"But what is it that you call Sālgrām? These are but names imagined of the Supreme Spirit, manifested as light. He is the ruler of all hearts. He is present within and outside all things and every creature, and is one and all-comprehending. The error is that you believe yourselves and induce others to believe that Jagannath is wood and Sālgrām, which is but the cast of a shell occurring on the river Gandaki. If these had been the Truth or real Being, then why is there no change of heart in you, despite your perpetual worship and association with them? Observe how troubled you are by the greed for the least of coins."

"But," rejoined the pāndā, "such is the sanctity of this place that men of all castes can eat together."

"Men incur no sin anywhere by eating together, only caste rules stand in the way. Religious belief has produced a dread that unless, in this place, the pilgrim ate with all castes evil will follow. This is the reason for the act. It is not done out of love for God or man. The real object of dining together is to learn that God is in every creature and all are included in Him, and to lose hatred of one another, thereby finding peace. Spiritual wisdom, which puts an end to the feeling of separateness between man and man, is the true field (*kshetra*) of Jagannath, where God is seen in all things and all things in God."

"There is, my lord," rejoined the pāndā, "great merit in obtaining a sight of Jagannath. The sacred text says: 'Jagannath, in the form of a dwarf, being seen in his car, incarnation is abolished and emancipation secured.'"

"Men, blinded by ignorance," said Sivanarayan, "come

[1] An emblem of Vishnu.

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at great trouble and cost to this spot from distant places to see an image of *neem* wood in a wooden car. Those who teach such ways bring suffering upon themselves and others. The Jagannath is the all-comprehending Being, whose expression is light. He is the world's parent, teacher, and Lord. The bodies of all creatures are his car, of which the faculties of action and sensations are the wheels, the mind the horses, kept in order by the reins of spiritual instructions; and the Lord, manifested as light, seated in this car, is doing, or causing to be done, by internal prompting, all that is done. So long as the individual soul does not see the Supreme Soul or Jagannath in the head of the body intimately united with itself, fear and doubt about life and death do not cease. When this intimate union is realised the soul is freed from all concern about life and death—this is called emancipation from rebirths. Beside Him, who is all-comprehending, one and expressed as light, in the wide expanse of space none other Jagannath is, was, or can be. Of this there is no doubt. The text you cited has no other significance."

The pāndā remained silent.

"Why," continued Sivanarayan, "does your Jagannath get fever, and why does he fast? Pilgrims are much inconvenienced, being prevented from seeing the god for a fortnight after the Bathing Festival (*Snānājātrā*).

"By using the waters of the golden well (*swarna kup*) for bath and drink Jagannath sickens with fever. For a fortnight he fasts, taking a medicated infusion all the time, and we have to wrap him up in blankets. After that his youth is renewed and he makes a nine days' visit to his maternal aunt, finally returning to the temple in his car.

"Alas! how low have you fallen! If your Jagannath is only a figure of *neem* wood how can it get fever by drinking and bathing in foul water? Is it possible for

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a piece of wood to behave like a sentient being, take medicine, feel cold, or to have human relationship of aunt and nephew? The real Jagannath or Lord of the Universe has no aunt, nor does He come and go. He is present everywhere in His plenitude."

"The fact is," struck in another pāndā, "the colouring of the figure fades at the end of a year, and Jagannath is kept hidden in the temple for a fortnight to be repainted. When pilgrims assemble for the car festival Jagannath is revealed to public view and his renewal of youth proclaimed. The story of his fever is given out to satisfy impatient pilgrims whose devotions are delayed. The real mystery is not known to the people."

"The true Jagannath," said Sivanarayan, "is the all-comprehending Ruler of hearts. In His fulness He dwells within and outside all things and beings. He is the Lord whose manifestation is light. The Jagannath worshipped in this temple is but a wooden doll, not the world's true Lord. Put into the fire it will turn to ashes."

"Are you," said the first speaker, "a paramhansa? I have troubled you with much vain talk without knowing you. Count not my offence against me. Grant me forgiveness. Do not let the pilgrims hear what you have said about Jagannath, otherwise our gains will suffer."

Wandering about the temple precincts Sivanarayan noticed a device of the pāndās to impress the pilgrims with a due sense of the sanctity of the place. In the sight of the pilgrims pots full of rice and water are piled one on the top of another over a fireplace. When the pilgrims return to the spot it is shown to them that the rice in the top pots are boiled and eatable, while the contents of the pots nearest to the fire remain uncooked. Such is the majesty of the god and the holiness of his habitation. The simple-minded pilgrims take no notice of the surreptitious exchange of places by the pots, or the half-cooked character of the rice put into the pots on the top.

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"What is there in this to wonder at?" said Sivanarayan, addressing the belief-makers. "If the world's true Lord wanted to exhibit His glory He could, before your eyes, boil rice without visible fire. You can all see that in the bodies of animals He is burning up, without visible fire, fodder, food, and raw meat, and yet makes worms live within creatures when He so wills. Are we to believe or disbelieve in Him and His power because the rice is cooked or remains raw? The all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, is creating, maintaining, and destroying myriads of worlds while dwelling within each of you. He is giving you wisdom and salvation (*mukti*). Does nothing of this show you His glory? Before you were born you had not sentience, senses, or bodies; now you have them. Does not this inspire you with a belief in Him? Your belief can only come by the rice being cooked or left raw. What greater shame or misfortune can there be?"

Amongst those who heard some were ashamed, some angry, but the truth found no resting-place in any heart.

Sivanarayan went to the neighbouring town of Nadigrām in the Balasore District to be present at a fire-offering (*yajna*) celebrated by the Zemindar of that place. A pundit, learned in the Yajur Veda, accompanied him. A large number of local pundits were assembled for the occasion, and a great crowd of common people. The ceremony was performed under the direction of the local pundits. According to their traditional custom the fire is ignited after invocation (*ābāhana*), purificatory rites (*kushandikā*), and general worship. Then follow rites relating to the generation (*garbhā-dhāna*) and marriage of the Fire with Swāhā and Swādhā.[1] The custom observed by the Yajurvedic pundit omits the rites of

[1] Two words used in the mantras or formulæ uttered in making offerings in the fire and conceived as deities.

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generation and marriage. This led to a warm disputation, and Sivanarayan had to interpose.

"Listen, O learned pundits," said he: "to teach without understanding is fraught with evil consequences to high and low. Consider this. Having performed the rites of generation in regard to the fire you put yourselves in the position of its father. And yet the scriptures say, 'Fire is the spiritual guide of the twice-born castes.' How can fire be your spiritual guide, you being the progenitor of fire? God, in His fivefold expression known as earth, water, fire, air, and ākāsa, is present from beginningless time. What individual can perform the rites of generation and beget them? God, expressed as fire, your spiritual guide and object of worship, is present before you as the sun, moon, stars, and lightning. He is present in all things of life, digesting food and keeping them sentient. If He becomes quiescent the body gets cold, diseases come on, ending in death. What are Swāhā and Swādhā to whom you marry fire? Have they form and attributes, or are they devoid of all qualities? If the latter they are beyond the reach of mind and speech, irresponsive to the senses. From the spiritual point of view—in terms of absolute reality—God, without qualities, may be identified with and in that sense married to the manifested God. But can there be a marriage such as you have performed? Were the two brides in manifestation they would have been perceptible to the senses as the bridegroom (fire) is. How can a marriage be celebrated unless both parties to it are present? The fire is, no doubt, here before us, but where are the others? Are they the fivefold expressions of God, or any or none of them?"

"My lord," said one of the local pundits, "we know not what or where those two are. We only declare what is written."

"Suppose," said he, "some humorist writes that an

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ant swallowed up a herd of marching elephants or kicked down the Deity and devoured Him, making Him cry inside the little insect, shall you, without discrimination, accept what is written. Lack of discrimination has thrown you into a fatal inertia. You do not know God even in His expression or manifestation as light; how, then, can you know Him in His formless, motionless, attributeless aspect?"

CHAPTER IX.

At Tārakeswar—The Mohunt—The sanctity of Tārakeswar—"Of what jail is this the prisoner?"—At Burdwan—The temple of Sarvamangalā—At Santipur—The hospitable Pundit—His uninvited guests—The moribund house at Triveni—The Zemindar's groom—At Dakhineswar—Kali's temple—The Paramhansa Ram Krishna—Kalighat—Sivanarayan's expulsion from the temple—The true Kali.

At the famous shrine of Tārakeswar Sivanarayan found the Mohunt, Madhava Giri, seated in a chair, surrounded by pundits who squatted on the ground.

"Who are you?" asked the Mohunt, whose contempt was excited by Sivanarayan's simple dress, and anger kindled by the latter's omission to salute him in due form.

"I am the same as you are," said Sivanarayan.

"How can you be the same as I?" rejoined the exasperated Mohunt. "Are you a householder or a sannyāsi? If the latter, to what order do you belong—Giri, Puri, or Bharati?"

"What substance is indicated by the names you have used?"

"Don't you know sannyāsis of the ten names?"

"Consider calmly: when you were in the householder's condition you had only one name; now having had your head shaved you belong to those who bear ten names.

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But what have you gained by the change? What is it that you call sannyāsi? Is it red, black, blue, green, or of any other colour? Is it flesh, blood, or bone, or is it the senses? Men have these things in common with brute beasts: can a brute beast be a sannyāsi?"

"Are you," asked the Mohunt, "a paramhansa? What Shastras have you studied, and what is your name? Be seated here at ease."

"Whether I have studied the Shastras or not you will know, but how can I say what my name is, so many are given me? Some one would call me "O sādhu," and I answer "O father," then Sādhu becomes my name; others call me sannyāsi, paramhansa, madman, concubine's brother (*sālā*), and so forth, and I get those names. In this way the names I get are without number and I answer to them all; I cannot tell what my true name is."

The pundits respectfully stood up and invited Sivanarayan to be seated.

"Have you," asked the Mohunt, "visited the god Tārak Nāth?"

"Where is Tārak Nāth, and what is his form?"

"He is in the temple, sanctifying it with his presence."

"Is he present in any form, or is he formless? If formless, he is everywhere but unseen. If he has any form he will be readily perceptible. You can perceive the forms in which God is expressed—earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, and sun. The same light is called by night moon and sun by day. The whole universe, consisting of what moves and what moves not, is He. Beside these no other form of God exists or can exist. Which of them is Tārak Nāth? Is Tārak Nāth dust, clay, or the temple, or the stone inside the temple, or is he something that dwells in the stone? If he be the clay, stone, or dust, then there being no end to the houses, temples, hills, and mountains composed of such materials, and the earth being present everywhere, say which of them is Tārak Nāth?

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Even if Tārak Nāth be something that dwells in the stone, that something must be included in the fivefold expression of God. Then, where is the good of coming here to see him? If you had recognised Him of whom Tārak Nāth is but an imagined name, and established your faith on Him, He would not have visited you with such misfortune." [1]

"What misfortune are you referring to? Have you observed the glory of Tārak Nāth? Countless sick people come here, and by fasting induce the god to perform miracles of healing in their favour. The cure is revealed to the sufferer or his deputy[2] in a dream, or the appropriate remedy is actually put into his hands miraculously. This place is so holy that it attracts more pilgrims than any other shrines. How do you explain this?"

"That is so," said Sivanarayan, "but consider this. A man desirous of establishing a market for his own benefit proclaims to traders that by coming to that market their expenses will be small and their gains great. This is believed and the market flourishes. Jugglers attract spectators by the beat of drums. But are we on that account to worship the juggler or the market-place, as filled with divine glory? If you say that Tārak Nāth is to be worshipped as the healer of the sick, then why don't we worship medical practitioners who cure diseases by their science? They have this advantage besides—being animate they can do much else. If Tārak Nāth is to be worshipped as the giver of dreams, and this place to be deemed holy on account of dreamers dreaming dreams here, then as there are many means of inducing dreams, and dreams are dreamed in every house, ought we to worship those means as Tārak Nāth and all houses as Tārakeswar? Many sick men are cured of disease by eating roots and herbs, picked by other men. The fact

[1] This Mohunt underwent a term of imprisonment for adultery.
[2] Austerities to secure a miracle at this shrine may be performed through a deputy.

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is, diseases are removed by suitable means, appointed by God to that end. Inappropriate remedies cannot effect a cure. While some diseases are cured without any special remedy, running out their natural courses, others end only with death. Such is God's law. If against such law we kill ourselves by beating our heads on the steps of Tārak Nāth's temple the disease will not go. Consider for a moment. The facts are all before you. You were guilty of an offence. To avoid the consequences, personally and by deputy, you worshipped Tārak Nāth assiduously. But your punishment was not averted. Why was this so? Had he been the true God he would have purified your heart with wisdom and heard your prayer. Darkness cannot exist in a lighted place, and the true Being cannot be without manifestation or action. God wished your imprisonment, and to prison you had to go. A similar fate overtook the Raja of Puri. Had you but faith in the true God, manifested as light, He would have saved you from all troubles and afflictions. Your devotion is from the lips and not from the heart. I mean not to give you pain for its own sake. But as the diseased limb must be removed by the surgeon's knife for the health of the whole body, so by unpleasant words of truth the dark veil of ignorance must be lifted from the mind. The wise receive such wounds with patience and accept the truth in all things.

"Furthermore, is the true Tārak Nāth (literally, the Saviour Lord) able to remove evil only at Tārakeswar? Can He not cure every man in His own home, is He not omniscient, is there any power that He has not? Has He such foolish partiality as to say, 'I shall not cure this man, for he has not come to my house to perform austerities?' Were it true that diseases are cured by austerities at Tārakeswar disappointment would have been unknown to devotees and doctors superfluous. If a man has faith in the true God, whose manifestation is light, and leaves not his

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home, God removes all sufferings of his flesh and spirit. But faith is not always strong enough to give rest to the mind by reliance only on Him. Those alone whose faces are turned away from the all-comprehending Supreme Being, whose manifestation is light, can believe in the holiness of particular places; they cannot believe that the plenitude of Godhead dwells in all things and in each of them.

"Finally, remember that the scriptures say, as is the object worshipped so will the worshipper be. The emblem of shame you worship in metal and stone trouble your minds with inordinate lusts of the flesh, and wisdom passes by you unheeded. No one worships the true characteristics (*lingam*) of God as the gross or matter, the subtle or force, and the cause or substance. An endless stream of misery flows from such impiety."

"It is true, my lord," said the Mohunt, "but faith comes not without God's grace, and He is not received as everywhere present in His plenitude."

Sivanarayan accepted the Mohunt's hospitality. Close by the bungalow of eight thatches (*ātchālā*) where he rested a monk, perfected in God, according to common report, was receiving the homage of a large crowd.

"Of what jail," inquired the monk concerning a woman whose personal ornaments tinkled as she passed, "of what jail is this the prisoner?"

"My lord," said the object of his jest, "I belong to that jail in which you were a prisoner for nine months. A shaven head and a dress dyed brown have given you the prideful right of calling yourself a sannyāsi. But is it not to your shame? What were you before you were born? Even now you are a prisoner to spiritual pride."

"Mother," said the sannyāsi with joined palms, "I salute you humbly. Your words of wisdom have opened my eyes. You are my guru."

From Tārakeswar Sivanarayan went to Burdwan.

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In front of the temple of Sarvamangalā a crowd was assembled of Brahmins and sādhus. It was enjoined by the Raja, whose ancestors had founded and endowed the temple, that people should be fed out of the offerings made to the idol. A temple official took in Brahmins known to him; the passport for strangers was their sacred thread.

A low-caste man from Ghazipur, whom Sivanarayan had met on the way, showed the sacred thread round his neck and was admitted in the company of Brahmins. As he returned to the temple gate Sivanarayan exhorted him not to practise deception by wearing the thread. He professed penitence, but was soon after found in the public gardens—*Gulāb Bāg* [1]—disguised as a Brahmin.

Some wandering friars were at the door. By birth they belonged to the 'twice-born' castes. But with the renunciation of the world they had put away the holy thread. The official did not accept the account they gave of themselves, and the absence of the caste insignia resulted in their ignominious expulsion. One of them as spokesman requested to be supplied with plain rice, not desiring any delicacy of fare. They were bidden to be still. After a long while the request was repeated, pointing to the lateness of the hour and their wandering profession, but was met with the answer that the feeding of the strangers was over for the day.

Sivanarayan, however, observed the temple authorities for their own benefit selling for a trifle rich dishes to people of the lowest castes.

Arriving at the house of a pundit at Santipur, Sivanarayan found him engaged in a learned disputation on the correct grammatical form of the last word in the holy formula of Brahmanic faith—the Gāyatri. Three paramhansas from Benares, unasked guests in the house, were receiving the honours enjoined by the sacred law when Sivanarayan approached them. The extreme

[1] Literally, the Garden of Roses.

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simplicity of his attire prevented a hospitable reception. One of the paramhansas made him take a seat near himself and spoke to him words of civility.

"Who are you," enquired a pundit, "what is your caste, where do you live, are you a householder or an ascetic? If an ascetic, where is your dyed robe and where the rosary of *rudraksha* beads?"

"I am a man," said Sivanarayan; "I am of the lowest class, an outcaste. I am a dweller of the city of Truth (Satyapur). I don't know whether I am a householder or an ascetic. I have heard those expressions, but of what things they are the names I do not know. I see this, that all men have bodies composed of the five elements, the senses and organs of all are alike, and speech issues from the subtle part of all men. What things are householder and ascetic, deign to explain."

"You can see with your own eyes that three great-souled ascetics of the highest order of sanctity are seated here."

"If these are ascetics so are you. The substance they are you are. Whatever is in them is in you."

"What Shastras have you studied, and where have you studied them?"

"Where my speech has its origin all Shastras are studied."

"Who has taught you?"

"The all-embracing Dweller in the heart. To me learning and non-learning are the same."

"What is your name?"

"The names by which men call me are countless in number. I answer to them all."

"What is your food," asked the pundit, to test if Sivanarayan was a paramhansa, "and from whose hands do you take it?"

"I eat what is food for man. I take it from the hands of whoever gives it."

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"Shall you eat from the hands of a Moslem or an Englishman?"

"I see no difference between yourselves and a Moslem or an Englishman. All are alike formed by the five elements. When I can find distinct things called 'Moslem' and 'Englishman' I would object to receive food from their hands. If you say they eat what is forbidden to you, then you must know that many, calling themselves Hindus, eat the same things. Besides, if I hate them I shall be guilty of hating the all-comprehending Supreme Being. The Lord Krishna says: 'I, taking shape as fire, am seated in the bodies of living beings and, united with the upward and downward breath, digest the four kinds of food.'"[1]

Hoping to resume the conversation some other time the pundit showed the way to where food was laid out for the guests. Sivanarayan and one of the paramhansas began to eat. The other two would not eat with their own hands. The pundit placed balls of rice into their open mouths. The others ate but little; Sivanarayan, according to his appetite, forfeiting his character for sanctity. None spoke to him after the meal.

"Does constant association and union with the Supreme Being, who is sentience itself, add to a man's consciousness or take away from it?"

"Adds," said the pundit in answer to Sivanarayan. "But why this question?"

"The reason for my question is this. An impression prevails that one in the condition of a paramhansa eats but little, and that not with his own hands. But men do not see that the whole universe, moving and stationary, is the body and organ of the Great Lord, Virāt. What do I lose if I eat with my own hands, and what do I gain if I am fed by others? Has God made my hands powerless and only my mouth active? Shame on such thought

[1] Bhagavad Gita, ch. xv, v. 14.

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and practice! It is but slavery for the sake of honour from men. God is the Master, and for our welfare we must obey Him in all things. So also about the quantity of food required by an individual. Each engine has to be fed with water and coals sufficient for the work it has to do. To eat as others direct is a cause of trouble."

The abstemious ascetics left soon after for a walk by the Ganges side. Sivanarayan happened upon them at a solitary spot, munching some parched rice procured from a neighbouring modi shop. To remove their embarrassment and confusion he pointed out to them that hunger and thirst visit us by God's law, and there is neither sin nor shame in satisfying them as they come.

Crossing the Ganges Sivanarayan, in the course of his wanderings, rested near the ghat at Triveni, in the room intended for Hindus desirous of yielding up their last breath on the banks of the holy river. It was afternoon, and boys on their way home from school were trooping past. They began pelting him with brickbats. A gentleman came by and asked the reason. The boys said that either a ghost or a madman was in the moribund room and was abusing them.

The new-comer shouted to know who the stranger was. Sivanarayan beckoned him inside the room and told him the boys were not to blame. Their characters were moulded by the training they had received. As they were taught so they behaved. He saluted Sivanarayan respectfully, and begging him to rest a while promised to return after apprising the villagers of his presence. To avoid a crowd Sivanarayan left the place and passed the night under a tree.

Next day a Zemindar's servant meeting him on the road asked him to take service with the Zemindar as a groom. Sivanarayan accompanied him. Unknown to the servant and against his instructions, Sivanarayan found his way to the Zemindar's presence. The latter,

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startled, offered him a seat, to the amazement of the assembled company. A few there were, however, who thought he might be a man of God.

Questioned by some as to his visitor, the Zemindar said they could all see he was a man and could attend to their own business. At his invitation Sivanarayan stayed to meal, and left him after some conversation on spiritual topics.

Sivanarayan came to Kali's temple at Dakhineswar, near Calcutta. The keeper of the temple was in conversation with a Brahamachāri, who was seated under a tree. In answer to the former the new-comer said: "You can see I am a man. My home is in the city of Truth. My name is Unreality. I am coming from the city of Illusions."

"What is the rascal saying? What are you? Have you studied any Shastras?"

"What is the object of questioning me about the study of Shastras?"

"There is an object. Are you a householder or an ascetic?"

"What thing is a householder and what an ascetic? How do they look? Where are they to be found?"

"Don't you see an ascetic here?" said the keeper, pointing to the Brahamachāri.

"I see a man with matted hair. What thing is there in him that you call 'ascetic'? I find in him only that which I find in all other men. Why do you call him an ascetic?"

"It is," struck in the Brahamachāri in anger, "it is unintelligible what he says. He is muttering like a lunatic. Seize him and take him to the Paramhansa Ram Krishna; he will find out by conversation what sort of a man this is."

Sivanarayan accompanied the temple official to where Ram Krishna was lying down to rest. They gazed on

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each other for some time. The temple-keeper, breaking the silence, roughly bade Sivanarayan sit down.

"Are you an ascetic or an householder?" asked Ram Krishna, the preliminaries over. "If an ascetic, to what sect do you belong? If a householder, to what caste? Where are you coming from?"

"Don't you know to what caste you and I belong, whence we have come, of what sect we are, and whether we are ascetics or householders? With the spirit's eye have you ever seen an ascetic or a householder? The way of the world counts endless sects and castes. But for the true ascetic, whose sole end is truth, what sect or caste can there be?"

"That is true indeed, but in the way of the world they are and must be spoken of."

"One plunged in figments of the mind must speak of them, but why should he, whom these do not affect, search for them?"

"If those figments have ceased to be at play, then only are such words the rule."

"Have they not ceased for you in all this time? He who is pursuing the truth as his sole goal, planted firm on the true path, sees only the truth. He who is immersed in figments of the mind or Māyā sees but figments."

"Is the truth manifest for you?"

"How can I answer this question? As what reality am I to accept myself and admit the manifestation of what other reality?"

"Are you a paramhansa, charged with the duties of an ascetic? Whoso contains the truth is an ascetic. The characteristic of that condition is the utterance of truth. He in whom the conflict of truth and untruth or reality and seeming has ceased, leaving truth alone manifested, without obstruction, is a paramhansa."

"If you are of that condition, then what is the use of

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these questions about that which only seems? Why should one to whom that condition is present ask such questions as these? But one who, having heard the words of the scriptures, has imagined, regarding himself, such a condition, would naturally inquire about such matters, because the condition is really not his."

"Do you think I am resting contented with merely hearing the words of the scriptures, and that is why I am asking my questions? Have you come here to instruct me in wisdom?"

"As the fire is known by the smoke, so your words make everything known."

"This rascal," said the temple official, under his breath but intending to be overheard, "has come to instruct our paramhansa in wisdom! Let him be seized and sacrificed before the goddess."

"What," asked Ram Krishna, "is the rule about your food? Do you eat meat and fish or only vegetables?"

"Only vegetables. But order it as you think best."

A vegetarian meal was ordered. The temple official abused him for eating not sparingly but as much as he required. At the end of the meal he went outside the temple and sought rest in an outer building. Towards evening a man came to take him to Ram Krishna. But he refused to go at that time. They tempted him by promises of sweetmeats and other delicacies, and having failed in their object threatened to drag him by the legs or to break his bones with splinters of wood. The threats, however, were not carried out, and Sivanarayan departed in peace.

Next evening Sivanarayan sat down in a corner of the Nāt Mandir[1] (dancing pavilion) at Kalighat. After a third part of the night had passed one of the temple officials told him to go away. Permission to spend the

[1] Outer building belonging to a temple and set apart for dances during festivals.

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night there was refused as against the commands of Mother Kali and the orders of the Government. On inquiry it was elicited that the prohibition was enforced owing to the recent theft of the goddess's jewellery and ornaments.

"Ornaments of Mother Kali," exclaimed Sivanarayan. "Does she wear them like a weak mortal woman, and is she, like them, unable to protect her property? How can she then protect the world?"

"Do you, fellow, know her truly?" was the question in reply.

"Had you, her vaunted guardians," continued Sivanarayan, "known her truly where would have been your present burden of suffering? What you call Mother Kali is, I can see, but an image, fashioned by man's hands out of earth, wood, stone, and metal. Her head and three eyes are scooped out of a block of stone. A rod supporting the head is built round with lime and mortar, the breasts are but metal, bamboos form the back part. The four hands of metal are decorated with golden ornaments, and a golden tongue is put into the mouth. Which of these is Mother Kali? If the stone, then mountains, curry-stones, and stone cups for domestic use are also she. If the gold, then all gold ornaments worn by man and woman are she. If the mortar and metal be she, then those things are but modifications of earth which is everywhere to be found. What special recognition is to be given it here? If you say she is in these things, then say further, has she a form or is she formless? If the latter, she must be invisible, omnipresent. If the former, then she must be responsive to the senses. Search for the Mother Kali who really is. Sink not further in error. Open your eyes and see the all-comprehending Being, manifested as light, day and night."

The interlocutor, by way of reply, took Sivanarayan by the nape of his neck and put him outside the temple precincts.

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"This is no fault of yours," said Sivanarayan, smiling. "Your intelligence partakes of the nature of the stock and stone you worship as divinity. You give honour to the inanimate clay you preserve in your temple, and drive away ignominiously sentience, which is the true Siva."

It was a rainy winter night. Wilful exposure in such weather was an offence against the indwelling spirit. Sivanarayan begged for shelter in all the neighbouring houses, but found none. He was constrained to pass the night on the ghāt of Tolly's Nulla.

Next morning Sivanarayan met on the way a man who was reading a newspaper. The latter told him with regret that the Hindu Rajas were all dying out.

"This is the result," said he in reply, "of turning away from the all-comprehending Supreme Being, who is the Truth, the parent, teacher, and soul of all."

"In accordance with the scriptures and the ways of men," added Sivanarayan in the course of the conversation, "the foreheads of Mother Kali, Hanuman, Ganes, and other Hindu deities are painted with vermilion, and all your gods and goddesses are to be meditated upon in the sun. The reason for this is that the sun assumes, morning and evening, a red hue, which is represented by the red paint. Mother Kali is a name of the all-comprehending Supreme Being. The light, called sun and moon, spreading over the earth and sky is her tongue. With the sword of knowledge she preserves the unity of the individual soul with God, its true essence. In the head of a man are tied in a knot, as it were, the strings of consciousness passing through the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth, and known as light, ākāsa, air, and fire. This same light coursing through all the bones of the body is performing all the functions of life, great and small. This is symbolised by the garland of skulls round her neck. The head in her hand shows her power over all.

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The four internal faculties—instruments of the soul, and known as the intellect, affections, will, and egotism—are her four hands. The all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, has been imagined to be all the gods and goddesses of the pantheon. Besides that One no other god or goddess is, was, or can be. This is the reason why all gods and goddesses have, according to the Shastras, to be meditated upon in the sun. If you hold your hearts steadfast on this Being you will gain the true end of existence, spiritual and temporal. If this One had not been the only true object of worship the Shastric injunction about meditation in the sun and offerings in the fire, in the name of all the god and goddesses, would have been meaningless. The different parts or 'limbs' of this One, as appearing to man's intelligence, are conceived of as individual gods and goddesses. Thus we hear of earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, and sun divinities. These seven elements form the outer or gross and inner or subtle body of man. It is for this reason that we worship the 330 millions of gods and goddesses, including in their number the tortoise, the fish, the hog, the dog, and the maiden. From the lowest worm to the lordliest man, the one God is seen. Every woman is the Devi and every man Siva. This is true beyond doubt or dispute."

"How can we," said Sivanarayan's interlocutor, "directly worship the Supreme Being? We are not fit to receive Him. We must therefore worship images."

"Very well," said Sivanarayan, "but consider this. If a child is, in the years of unreason, separated from his parents and has no other aid to search them out but photographs of the separated ones, he must compare those he meets with the likenesses he possesses. Of what avail the likenesses if they do not help him to recognise the true parents? Image-worship is useless if it helps not the worshipper to recognise the all-comprehending

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Supreme Being, manifested as light. Cast away all empty forms and learn to know truly the real Author of your being. He is full of goodness and will save you from all evils."

CHAPTER X.

Fyzabad—Rama's temple—Rama, living and dead—The story of Rama—"These be allegories"—Mokameh—"Hindu ascetics are liars"—"Show us your God"—Gauhati—Vasistha's Hermitage—Muktināth—Gya—Man gives salvation to man—The undying banyan.

Passing through many places Sivanarayan reached Fyzabad, the city noted as the birthplace of Rama, the divine hero. Moslem hands have reared a mosque on the site of his overthrown ancient temple. Close by has arisen a modern building, enshrining Rama's image. He had hardly sat down in a corner of the temple when the door of the inner sanctuary was closed, the offering of food to the image having ended. A sādhu, a stranger, just arrived, opened the door, and immediately the ascetics of the Ramanuja sect, in charge of the temple, fell upon him with sticks and drove him out with abuse. The sādhu received this treatment in silence and departed smiling.

"Ye Hindus," said Sivanarayan, touched by the scene enacted before his eyes, "have lost your reason completely. He, whom you would worship with food, after his long exile from your hearts, appears before you in a sentient form; you welcome him with blows, giving your worship and devotion to an image of stone. Why has God blinded you thus? Your fathers were strong with the strength that comes of worshipping the living God, and you their children have grown lifeless by worshipping what has

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no life; in self-oblivion you pass your days in loud lamentations. Confusing friends and foes, you waste your days in hate, contention, and strife. Peace sheds not a ray upon you."

"Who may you be?" asked one of the holy fathers; "know you not the glory of Rama? When his slave Hanuman can devour or put under one arm the great sun in the sky, how infinitely greater must be the master's majesty!"

"That Hanuman, whose face was burned, causing him to plunge in the ocean for coolness, by fire, which is but a small spark of that sun, should yet be able to treat in the way mentioned the sun—the expression of the all-comprehending Deity—is indeed strange. But our holy books are full of allegories, so hard to unravel. Try to understand the true explanation. The man of understanding, beloved of God, is called Hanuman in the books. The all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light—the sun in his twelve aspects, as the pundits say, one for each month of the year—includes in Himself all creatures, male and female, and is everlastingly present, impartible, and one. The twelve aspects are the ten faculties of action and sensation, the affections and intelligence. By His grace alone is He found without difficulty. To take these twelve to heart as one and indivisible is to devour the sun or put the sun under the arm. The true Hanuman is he who can view these twelve as one, identical with himself and God. Such a one can alone know God truly. The real Hanuman, by his discriminative intellect, perceiving within and outside of him Sita, the Universal Mother, the beneficent supreme energy, communicates with the individual soul, addressing it thus:—'Thou, the attributeless, transcendent Deity, art identical with the Universal Mother. At the griefless root[1]

[1] According to the legend, Sita was by her abductor, Rāvana, kept a prisoner in a grove of 'Asoka' trees. Asoka literally means 'the griefless.'

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of this tree of conditioned existence—in God Himself—she dwells hidden from view by the dark powers of the great captor, Egotism or Rāvana. Shoot the arrow of knowledge from the divine bow—Om—and kill this Rāvana. Then, united to her, thou shalt reign in the northern regions,' by which is meant the head or truth. 'Thou art That,' there is none else beside. Missing the inner truth of the allegory, you have adopted the monkey as your god, slowly approximating to the nature of him you adore.

"You all have intelligence. In all things exercise that faculty. If any say you are disembodied ghosts, even though alive, shall you accept it as true or reject it as false? You do not perceive that the light you can see as the sun and moon is self-manifest, has no gross body to be grasped. How, then, is it possible for a monkey with four hands and a tail to swallow or seize the light?

"You read how Rama, instructed by the sage Agastya, worshipped the light with prostrations and offerings, and by the strength thus obtained succeeded in slaying Rāvana. And yet you fable about Rama's servant—Hanuman—swallowing or seizing the light.

"The Supreme Being, attributeless and possessed of attributes, visible and invisible, whose expression is light—sun and moon—is eternal, self-existent, and one, including in Himself matter, sentience, and cause, the moving and the stationary. The individual, who by the worship of this Being obtains wisdom, is typified as Hanuman."

"By your favour," said one of the assembled sādhus, "we have gained much knowledge. Now deign to explain the true significance of the worship of Sakti (Divine Energy) by Rama."

"The Supreme Being manifested as light," said Sivanarayan, "is the divine energy. Worshipping Him on three days in His triple aspect—matter, sentience, and cause—Rama killed or conquered the ten-headed monster,

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Rāvana, the emblem of the ten faculties or organs of sensation and action, and rescued Sita, that is, obtained union with the divine energy. This is the day of victory (Vijayā). On this day disappears the selfish distinction of 'mine' and 'thine' as a motive of action, and, viewing all things as God and self, the individual becomes locked in one embrace with all. On the day of victory the blue-throated bird[1] must be seen. The self-illuminated sun and moon are the head, the limitless expanse of blue sky is the throat of the Divine Being, who swallows and assimilates the good and evil, enjoyment, and suffering, the poison and nectar of the world. Men want what pleases them, the opposite they shun. But the equal-sighted man (Samadarsi) accepts both alike, knowing them to be but expressions of himself. Even such a man is called the true conqueror of senses, Hanuman or Mahābir (the Great Hero)."

"Relying," said the sādhu, "on your great condescension, I venture to ask you for explanation of the other incidents in the story of Rama's life."

"Receive," said Sivanarayan, "the true meaning of the words, casting aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, and empty sectarian selfishness. Rama or the Supreme Being is omnipresent, all-embracing, and complete. His energy, full of blessedness, creative, preservative, and destructive, is the chaste Sita, the Mother of all. Lakshman is the discriminative regard for the substance or knowledge of Truth, the true wisdom. The falling off from God owing to forgetfulness of self is the piercing of Lakshman by the spear of force (*Sakti Sela*). Hanuman, rendered unconscious by Bharat's arrow while repeating the name of Rama, signified the last act of egotism by which the discriminating wise man attributes the world to himself, feeling himself to be the conqueror of the senses. To shatter this enthralling egotism the

[1] *Coracias Indica.*

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Divine Energy transfixes him with the arrow of desires, driving out strength and wisdom. The utterance of Rama's name with expiring consciousness saves the life of God-devoted wisdom, and induces the Divine Energy to reduce to order the unruly turbulence of sense. Hanuman is himself again, viewing God one with himself, all-embracing, complete. From the formless, attributeless, all-supporting existence as father, and out of the wisdom called Aditi (the Limitless One) proceeds the world-producing, self-illuminated Light. By Him the three regions, above, below, and that between, are made manifest. Lanka, Rāvana's abode, is the world of false knowledge. Wisdom is the arrow of Rāvana's death. When by true devotion the Rākshasas or errors are slain wisdom arises, showing all things as God and removing the egotistic assertion of existence, independent of God. From Aditi, the Limitless Wisdom, spring forth gods, from her rival wife, Diti, the Limited or Unwisdom, proceed the giants (Daityas). Penetrate the scriptural allegories and reach their inner meaning. Worship God, whose expression is light, with faith and devotion. By his gift of wisdom all wrong notions will disappear, and you will rest in the profundity of peace."

After a pause the listeners said: "My lord, your words are the words of truth. But faith comes from God."

At Mokameh, on the East Indian Railway line, Sivanarayan lived in a small thatched hut by the side of a large tank, surrounded by gardens. Two Englishmen came fishing in that tank.

"Hindu ascetics," said one of the sahibs at the end of the day's sport, "are liars. They work evil to the people by creating a belief in magic and in a multitude of gods."

"Who do you believe in?" asked Sivanarayan.

"The one God."

"Where is that one God you believe in? Has any man seen Him? As what is He seen?"

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"He is too holy to be seen. The pure in heart alone can see Him."

"Have you seen Him by attaining purity of heart? Can you show Him to us? How have you come to believe that He is?"

"We believe because it is so written in the Bible."

"On the authority of your scriptures you believe in one God. The Hindu on the authority of his scriptures believes in the 330 millions. They too are believed to be holy and unseen of all but the perfectly pure."

"Show us one out of so many millions."

"Show us the One you worship, or at least one of His attributes or forms."

"None can see Him. How can He be shown?"

"The same thing may be said of the Hindu gods. If one thing is admitted without proof why not as many more as can be desired, and the door opened for all the fables of the world and tales of marvel?"

"But," continued Sivanarayan, "the true God of the Hindu, the disposer of all good, OM, the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light—the sun and moon—embracing all creatures present, is before you all. From Him all things have proceeded, in Him they stay, and into Him they return. His various expressions, technically called 'limbs,' are imagined as the multitude of gods. The individual souls are gods, the senses and faculties are gods, earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, moon, and sun are all gods. From each god, typifying one particular kind of energy or forming a particular 'limb' of God, a definite class of phenomena proceeds. From the god called earth proceeds food, flesh, and bones; from water, drink, blood, and the bodily juices; from fire, eating, digestion, and utterance; from air, the breath of life; from ākāsa, hearing; from the moon, the affections; from the sun, judgment or intelligence and light. If any of these gods

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be absent or inactive, creatures would perish. The light called the individual, unified with the light called the sun, rests in the One Cause. The gods of the Hindus are, in the sight of all, engaged in upholding and continuing the life of the world. Where is the One you worship and consider distinct, in form and substance, from these?"

"If," said the sahib, "one of our great padres had been here he would have explained these things to you."

"Great or small no man can call into being what is not. Will they create God to show Him to me? He who is manifest can alone be shown. Him, in his formless, attributeless aspect none can see or show. If the followers of the different religions of the world understand the true import of these words, peace will come to all and good-will be established in the place of evil."

Sivanarayan arrived at Gauhati, in Assam, by steamer from Goalundo. The common people of Bengal believe Gauhati or Kamrup to be the city of enchantment. Women of Kamrup are supposed to cast their spells on strangers in the city, turning them into sheep. By magic they are said to transport themselves and others to long distances, perched on tree-tops. Inquiring into the origin of this superstition, Sivanarayan found that in the days previous to steam and electricity pilgrims to the shrine of Kamrup fell, in large numbers, victims to fatigue, disease, and wild beasts. Others contracted Assamese marriages and forgot their kith and kin, duty, and home. If any returned they brought back traveller's tales as a shield against consciousness of shameful conduct or from some other equally intelligible motive. Prisoners to lust are the only men turned into sheep. There is no other.

Some way beyond the town the temple of the goddess Kāmākhyā stands on a hill. Higher up is the temple of Bhubaneswari. No idol or image is to be seen in the former temple. A triangular pit, wide and dark, cut into

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the rock forming the floor of the temple, is painted red in oils and covered with a piece of cloth of reddish hue. This emblem of creation is shown to pilgrims by the dim light of an earthen lamp. Large gifts to the priests secure for the devout worshipper a piece of the covering cloth as a talisman.

A female figure of stone is the presiding divinity of the temple of Bhubaneswari. Close by is the *āsan* of a Brahamachāri. The wishes of a pilgrim of means, desirous of worshipping the goddess in the flesh, are often gratified by the appearance of a being who, some people say, is a woman of the town, in appropriate disguise.

The pāndās told Sivanarayan that when the Rajas of Cooch Behar reigned in Assam a golden image, a royal gift, was enshrined in the temple of Kāmākhyā. A pāndā in course of time sold the image, wasting the proceeds in riotous living. The triangular symbol has stood for the image ever since. At the end of the narration Sivanarayan addressed the pāndās, saying: "Why have you, moved by contemptible selfishness, become a curse to yourselves and others? Misled by false hopes, men are falling away from the true God and suffering in body, mind, and means. The Supreme Being, really existent and expressed as light, is everywhere. To find Him one need go nowhere and spend nothing. A sincere heart alone is needed. Abandon this profession which is hurtful to your fellow-man and adopt some innocent mode of living, so that you may be a blessing to yourselves and others."

"A better profession," said he, "does not exist. In all others you have to humble yourself before someone or another. But in this, the rich and the powerful fall at our feet while supplying us with all we want. Besides, for us what other profession would be as lucrative as this one?"

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"If rulers of men and possessors of wealth had wisdom the world would not have suffered as it does. You have, to your own hurt, turned your faces away from the eternal God. A rational being ought to forsake such ways as yours, else you become offenders before God."

In a different direction, but not far from Gauhati, Sivanarayan arrived at a place which is believed holy and called Vasistha's "Asram" or Hermitage. The temple is shut in by hills on three sides. A waterfall leaps down near the temple, with noise and tumult. A stone image in the cavern within the temple is supposed to be the sage, Vasistha. The sides of the cavern are marked by three similar figures representing the persons of the Hindu trinity. A wooden image outside also goes by the name of Brahmā. The pāndās make pilgrims bathe in the fall of water, which is named the Ganges. The noise of the fall drowns all human voice, a phenomenon attributed by the pāndās to the sanctity of the place which strikes the visitor dumb. The sounds of insect life, heard on the remoter parts of the temple grounds, are fabled to be the music of 'apsarās' or celestial dancing-girls attached to the court of the god Indra. The waters of the sacred cascade fall into a dark cavern in the temple and disappear underground, finding an exit elsewhere. The pilgrims are shown the images by lamp-light. This over, they depart after making the customary payments and offerings.

Travelling and teaching in Assam, Sivanarayan passed through Shillong, Tezpur, Dibrugarh, and Sibsagar. The last-named place contains the shrine of Muktināth, much frequented by pilgrims. A pāndā, taking him for a pilgrim, pressed him hard to visit the shrine.

"What substance," he asked, "is the Muktināth that you are pressing me to see? What form does it present to the senses? What comes of seeing Muktināth, and what of not seeing it?"

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"*Mukti* (salvation) and many other benefits result from seeing Muktināth. How can *mukti* come without it?"

"You see and worship Muktināth every day of your life. Is *mukti* yours?"

"Not yet."

"How do you promise that to the pilgrim in a day what you have not attained in years? Why for a paltry gain sink with others into the darkness of errors? You do not consider who can be truly Muktināth, the Lord of *mukti* or salvation. He who is the truth, the pure, intelligence, without beginning or end, the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, is alone *mukti* and Muktināth. He alone can establish the soul in the supreme joy called *mukti*. For this reason Muktināth is one of the names given to God. None other bearing that name is, was, or can be."

All who were present heard him with gladness, and he spoke to them many words of truth. The pāndā expressed regret for having offered to show him an image of stone and craved forgiveness.

According to the guardians of the temple the town derived its name from Sib Sinha, a former Raja of Cooch Behar. His brother built the temple, establishing therein a stone image of Siva under the name of Muktināth. This is shown to pilgrims for a consideration. Sivanarayan explained to them that all temples, images, and holy places, wherever situated, are the outcome of man's imagination. Wandering in quest of these the weary pilgrim reaps as reward only poverty and suffering.

Sivanarayan found himself at Gaya. An ancient banyan close by is called the "Akshay Bata" or "Eternal Banyan." A Gayāli or pāndā of Gaya was pressing Sivanarayan to perform the customary ceremonies for the benefit of his ancestors' souls. The celebration at Gaya of these ceremonies ensures the instant ascension to heaven of the pious celebrant's ancestors. Sivanarayan addressed

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him, saying: "Into what woeful error have you fallen? You are worshipping a piece of metal fashioned like a human foot, calling it Vishnupāda.[1] By your advice others are worshipping the same, to their own impoverishment. As the reward of such devotions your greed and their sufferings are ever on the increase. Spiritual blindness has turned your hearts away from the true God. The Vedas clearly teach that the true feet of Vishnu or God is the earth from which you draw your sustenance and derive your flesh and bones. This common banyan-tree, you call undying, a spark of fire can reduce to ashes before your very eyes. This universe of forms is the banyan-tree, truly undying. But you do not cast a glance at the light which is its root. If with love and devotion you worship the all-comprehending light—sun and moon—you will see the true banyan-tree in its true form; in other words, you will see the universe one with yourselves and God. The light is the seed from which the world grows. What is, is in light. The devotee sees in the form of light called the moon the true banyan-tree, which is not different from the reality you call the moon. You worship mere forms, things that exist only as the figments of your mind. You suffer because you have fallen away from the true God. The pāndās at Allahabad, for their own gain, have set up an undying banyan-tree, the same as you, with the same result. Even now come together all of you in love and put an end to every such thing of deceit; even now take refuge in Him who really is, and He will, out of His own goodness, secure the good of all."

"Consider," said the Gayāli, "the sanctity of the place. We can give *mukti* or salvation to the ancestors of everyone who comes here and makes the requisite offering."

"The all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested

[1] I.e. the feet of the omnipresent god Vishnu.

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as light, the world's parent, teacher, and soul, is the world's one saviour or *mukti*-giver. How can you give *mukti*?"

"You must have seen how we bind a man's hands with a garland of flowers and strike him with another. When the required fee is paid we set him free, and in the act give *mukti* to his ancestors."

"Is that so? In bondage to desire yourselves, how can you remove that bondage from another? Can one tied securely to a post help another in similar plight? By merciless religious tyranny you are extorting money from pilgrims and giving their ancestors *mukti* by mere word of mouth. Shame on you who deceive, and shame on those who are deceived into the belief that salvation can be bought with money? There is no other saviour beside the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, nor was, nor can be. He holds in His hands the power of waking creatures into activity, making them dream dreams, and putting them into dreamless sleep. He alone can plunge us in ignorance, give formal knowledge and real experience. Of this doubt there is none. Seek refuge in Him and in mercy He will keep you in the supreme joy of *mukti*."

To a pāndā at Mathura Sivanarayan said:—"None considers the end to which God has given wealth and power to man. Proper use of them has become impossible in consequence. The rich, with lavish expenditure, build temples and consecrate images. The pāndās by deceit and falsehood turn them into sources of gain. Pilgrims undergo misery and oppression in the hope of rewards that never can come. None sees that God is not the author of these things, impotent alike for help or hurt. Wealth and power are given to one that many may rejoice thereat. To act otherwise is to offend in God's sight and reap the rebel's reward. This is true beyond doubt or cavil."

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CONCLUSION.

A few incidents in Sivanarayan's life at Calcutta and its neighbourhood are collected here.

Transplanting Calendula.

In the garden where he occupies a hut Sivanarayan was transplanting a *Calendula* shrub from the shade of a mango-tree. Some gentlemen and two Brahamachāris, in brown robes, came to see him. After salutations Sivanarayan asked them to wait until his work was finished. Seeing him at work, one of the visitors remarked: "We come to see a sense-conquering Mahātmā, but we find him engaged in work, showing his attachment to a worldly object. Had he been free from desire and attachment he would not have troubled himself about a calendula shrub. In bondage himself how can he help us?"

His work finished, Sivanarayan asked them about the object of their visit.

"We have come to see you. People say you are a great Mahātmā," was the answer.

"What is it," said Sivanarayan, "that you call a Mahātmā? What substance is it? Is it formless and attributeless, or has it a form and attribute? If the former, it cannot be sensed. How can you see it with the eyes of flesh? If the latter, the all-comprehending Being, embracing your bodies, senses, and faculties, is present everywhere. To see Him it is not necessary to go to any particular place. Of these or Him what is the great Mahātmā? If it be this form of flesh and bones, all creatures are He; if the individual soul, which is of divine substance, then all individuals are He. If great Mahātmā is but the name of a state or condition, then you will find on reflection that states or conditions are three, namely, ignorance, knowledge of truth, and truth itself. All creatures are born in ignorance. If that be great Mahātmā,

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then, too, all creatures are He. If knowledge, then the one God, including in Himself all things, moving and stationary, is the true knowledge. If truth itself, then mark this. To truth itself names such as Supreme Being, soul, attributed or attributeless, all-comprehending, cannot be applied. It or He is what It or He is. He is neither great nor small. In quest of Him no place has to be visited. Who or what have you then come to see as the great Mahātmā? If you say being in ignorance you have come to see Knowledge as the great Mahātmā, then tell me how can ignorance test knowledge? The dreamer knows not the condition of one awake nor the condition of one unconscious. In what condition do you think you are yourselves, and in what condition do you think am I, the man you have come to see, as a great Mahātmā?"

"We do not know. Deign to instruct us."

"First, free your minds from the shock you have received on coming here. We shall talk of other things afterwards."

"We have received no shock."

"Don't feel ashamed. Express your feelings without reserve. Your feelings are but natural."

Thus encouraged they frankly expressed the shock they had received on seeing Sivanarayan transplanting the calendula shrub.

"What think you of God?" asked Sivanarayan.

"He is one, secondless, omnipotent, all-comprehending, complete, and Creator of all. There is nothing better or higher than He," was the reply.

"That being so," said Sivanarayan, "why did He create the world and all in it? What thing is there better or higher than He, desiring which He has created the world and attached to which He is ceaselessly working for its continued existence. Seeing me transplant a tree you feel shocked, but if you consider the ways of God your perplexity will increase and make your light

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darkness. You have seen me transplanting a tree, but truly I have done nothing. You can see that I did not create the bodily limbs by which the work was done, nor has the earth, water, or seed of the tree proceeded from me. What is, is. All these have come from God, and are, in truth, His expressions, in reality no way separate from Him. Nothing can transcend Him. Then what did I see separate from Him to which I became attached by desire, in transplanting the tree. As the exertions experienced in dreams disappear, with their results, on awaking, so awaking in wisdom you perceive the truth concerning the desires and attachments you feel in ignorance. God Himself, supremely detached, works with infinite energy for the world. The man of wisdom, free from attachment, ceaselessly labours to teach others selflessly to work for the world's good. Prompted by ignorance and indolence you have dyed your robes so as to find excuse for believing yourselves detached. And yet, willing or unwilling, your senses and organs are doing their appropriate work, such as eating, etc. By God's mercy alone can you rise above the bondage of sense. Sense-conquest is but a power or attribute of His. Why do you become a cause for the suffering of yourselves and others, through deceitful ceremonies invented by man? If you find His mercy, your ignorance will depart and peace will descend on you. The wise man, a lion amongst men, in the midst of all actions of life and while experiencing all objects of sense, remains detached and in the enjoyment of the supreme joy of *mukti*. Each man according to his own nature judges the condition of the wise. Those wrapped up in ignorance cannot understand the motives of the wise. They attribute to the wise the attachment that prompts their own acts. To attribute to another the motives which actuate one's own conduct is natural for man. I shall tell you an illustrative anecdote. If you understand its true purport

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your errors will be removed. A saint was lying down by the side of a high road. Of three travellers who passed him, one remarked: "This man is resting after a whole night's thieving." Another disagreed and said: "He is sleeping off the effects of a drunken debauch." The third traveller attributed the result to a love intrigue. The holy man, who was giving his body a short rest after exhausting labours for the good of others, addressed them, saying: "All of you are right." Seeking an explanation of how three different statements could be correct, they were told this: "Each of you have attributed to me your own nature. I have no fault to find. By God's law your natural characteristics are showing themselves in action. You see in others what you are yourselves."

"These," said one of the Brahamachāris, "are words of the path of knowledge."

"Do you want to hear words of unwisdom? The wise man knows that although all creatures are expressions of the Deity, wisdom must be sought from the wise, and thieving from a thief. For cure of illness you must repair to a physician, and for wisdom and *mukti* you must seek refuge in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light—the sun and moon—who is truly the world's parent, teacher, and soul, by loving prayer and invocation through repeating mentally His name OM."

"You believe in Mother Kali?" asked the Brahamachāri.

"He who is," said Sivanarayan, "continues to be, whether you believe or disbelieve. He who is not cannot be, whether you believe or not. This earth that you see does not exist because somebody believes in its existence. Nor will it cease to be if everybody denied its existence. The asserter and the denier of its existence will have equally to dwell on it and draw sustenance therefrom. If Mother Kali, the all-comprehending Supreme Being,

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expressed as light, by her own nature exists, my belief or disbelief does not affect her existence. If, on the other hand, existence be not her nature, what does it matter if by word of mouth I confess her existence? You can directly perceive that the all-comprehending Supreme Being, expressed as light, including in Himself all that moves and all that moves not, is one infinite and impartible. If Mother Kali is one of the names of this Being I cannot but believe in her. If she is held to be something different, where is she? Show me her existence."

They heard with their ears, not with their understandings. In silence they bowed and took their departure.

Caste without Feast.

Sivanarayan had a sick visitor in his hut. At his request Ram Bhajan nursed the sick man. On the recovery of the visitor after a long and severe illness Ram Bhajan left with a trifling reward. His castemen decided he had suffered loss of caste by tending a sick man and could only be restored to it by providing a sumptuous caste feast. Ram Bhajan was extremely poor and with difficulty earned his daily bread. Finding the expense beyond his means Ram Bhajan returned to Sivanarayan and, with tears, laid the whole case before him. Sivanarayan consoled him, saying the requisite expense would somehow be met, and told him to go back to his caste-fellows and arrange with them that at the end of the feast they must show him where his caste had gone and give it back to him, or return to him the cost of the feast. The arrangement proposed, Ram Bhajan was questioned as to whose authority he was acting under. All things being related the guardians of caste purity remained silent. Ram Bhajan got back his caste without a feast.

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The Stick as an Exegetist.

Late one night a roisterous company, having feasted not wisely but too well, collected before Sivanarayan's hut, shouting: "Ho! paramhansa, come outside. We want to have a scriptural argument with you." Sivanarayan came out to them. His want of conventional clothing excited their derisive merriment.

He tried to quiet them, and enquired what sort of scriptural argument they desired. Without answering they kept on shouting, "We will have a scriptural argument." After much good counsel Sivanarayan told them to go home, as it was not safe for them to be out at such an hour. They continued shouting. Sivanarayan picked up a wooden post, intended to replace an old one in his hut, saying: "Wisdom cures ignorance and a cudgel wickedness."

"What is the stick for?"

"To answer your scriptural question. Without this stick none else can dispute with you."

"Want you to strike us?"

"Not if you go away quietly."

"Let's see how you can strike," shouted the midnight crew.

Sivanarayan, twirling the stick over his head, said: "To each end there is an appropriate means. If you don't leave I shall break your bones."

"Murder! Murder!" they shouted, and scampered off.

Holy Mahātmās.

A pundit, whose face reflected the peace within, addressed Sivanarayan, saying: "Men say holy Mahātmās dwell in forests, avoiding the habitations of men. If this be true, wisdom and *mukti* must indeed be hard for householders to attain owing to lack of instructors."

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"Reflect well," said Sivanarayan, "to him who is a true Mahātmā, in whom resides the perception of what things are in reality, what difference can there be between the solitary forest and the populous city? For him it would be more natural to be in a town than in a wilderness. Dwelling in some inaccessible place, of what use will he be to mankind? In the haunts of men his precept and example will be for the world's good. A selfish end is impossible in his condition. Good of others can alone furnish him with a motive of action. Will a Mahātmā then uselessly bear the burden of this body in a forest, and not strive to impart to others his own joyous blessedness? When discriminative knowledge first sprouts, when love of the truth puts forth its tender shoots, there may be a need for lonely solitude, free from temptations, so that the mind may not fall away from the truth. But why will a true Mahātmā, be he a sannyāsi or a householder, who has seen God or the true self as the visible and invisible, all-comprehending, one and indivisible, whose mind and senses are subdued and detached, prefer a forest? He will dwell where he chooses, no injunction or restriction governing him. If he experiences all the experiences of the world he experiences nothing separate from himself. Perceiving the real nature of suffering and enjoyment he becomes attached to nothing. As the suffering and enjoyment of dream life is seen, on awaking, to be one with the self, so are the suffering and enjoyment of the life of ignorance seen in the condition of wisdom or enlightenment, in no way separate from the experiencer. All things are seen by the wise to be God or the Self. That such a one avoids the habitations of men is a vain fancy of the unenlightened. If all such beings abandon men, then who will keep by words, written and spoken, the road of wisdom open?"

"True," said the pundit, "but at a friend's house

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I met a man, believed to have been perfected by his austerities and devotions, who refused to sit down to meal until a woman's portrait which happened to be in the room was placed with its face to the wall. But for this he would have left the house."

"You are," said Sivanarayan, "well versed in the scriptures. Where have you found that the sight of a woman is prohibited to a perfect man? Those unable to withstand the unruly impulses of sense avoid women for fear of consequences. The perfect man you spoke of had not attained to the Reality, or experienced the true substance. He was strongly attached to this doll, made of flesh and filth. He accepted himself as a man, the picture as a woman, and her as an object of enjoyment. He felt not that the male and the female body, their senses and organs, were exactly the same substance. He did not perceive that he himself was but pure intelligence and one with God in reality, that neither the male nor the female was really separate from God. If the knowledge of Reality had been his he would not have viewed the female figure as different from himself or asked it to be turned over. This is the truth, without doubt or uncertainty. Whoso hath perception of the true substance hath wisdom, and the wise alone have peace. So long as the male and the female are seen as separate from one another and from God, they are felt to be related together as the enjoyer and the enjoyed. In that condition the fickle senses generate attachment. After the condition of reality (Swarupa) is reached a man or a woman feels no such attachment, though surrounded by thousands of the opposite sex. By such a one all things are seen in and as God."

The Buddhist Pundit.

Sivanarayan found himself in the audience of a Buddhist preacher. "To establish the fickle mind," the preacher

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said, "is easy. Reality or substance has two aspects, formless (Nirākāra) and having forms (Sākāra). The Nirākāra transcends the mind, the mind cannot hold it. The attempt to do so is therefore useless. The Sākāra is perceptible and within the mental grasp of all. But it is unreal. No good can come of applying the mind to it. The mind, therefore, need not move at all. Thus, without scriptural study, devotions, or austerities, the mind has become free from movements." The listeners looked at one another and at the preacher in silence.

After an interval Sivanarayan was asked to speak. He said if the minds of those present had lost their fickle movements in consequence of what was said, no words from him were necessary. Being assured that such a result had not ensued, he continued: "Cast aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, and collective and individual selfishness that leads to nothing, and with discrimination search after the substance or reality. From the perception of the reality comes wisdom, and from wisdom peace. The reality has no more than two aspects, Sākāra or Nirākāra. Is the expounder himself Sākāra or Nirākāra? If the former, it transcends the mind and the senses. Perception, exposition, action cannot be in him, as they are not in dreamless sleep. But the agent of the act of exposition is perceptible to the senses, and must, then, be Sākāra, and therefore unreal. Words proceeding from what is unreal can be accepted or rejected with equal profit."

"I, the expounder," struck in the preacher, "am the breath of life. The breath is expounding the truth."

"All here present," rejoined Sivanarayan, "receive the truth with sobriety of understanding and peace at heart. If fire be present its attributes of burning or luminosity must also be present. When the fire disappears, with it disappear its attributes. If the expounding life-breath be present its attribute of intelligence, which is involved in

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the act of expounding, must also be present. But you can all see that in dreamless sleep the breath runs its usual course, but intelligence or discrimination is absent. What is it the absence of which causes the absence of intelligence in dreamless sleep? If intelligence had been an attribute of breath it would have been active in dreamless sleep. Consider, now, to what is due the intelligence whose action you see in the condition called waking. Of what is intelligence the attribute?"

"What am I to say," said the preacher, "to one in whom the truth is fully manifested?"

"O men," said Sivanarayan, "seek refuge, without pride, in God, manifested as light. He will move your hearts to the truth. So long as this light is active in your heads, eyes, and ears you are possessed of intelligence; when the all-comprehending Being, manifested as the light, called the sun, withdraws that light into the cause, you fall into dreamless sleep and perception disappears. In that condition, breath continues its work of circulating the blood to prevent putrefaction of the body. Receive the truth and abide in joy."

The Raja.

A Raja brought Sivanarayan to his palace with much honour. After salutations the Raja said: "If God there be, my lord, show Him unto me." Sivanarayan answered him, saying: "Seeing is the work of the eye. Men have imagined three kinds of eyes—the eyes of the flesh, the eye of knowledge, and the eye of the spirit. Of these, man cannot control even one. Without light the eye of the flesh cannot see. Without the union of light, which is the intelligent part of all external existence, with the light called consciousness within, there is no perception. When by the grace of the Supreme Being, whose manifestation is light, the Supreme Soul will be revealed as one with the individual soul, you will see the individual or yourself

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in identity with the Supreme Soul, God; or, as the cause or substance, the subtle or conscious force, the gross or matter. This is the eye of the spirit."

"True," said the Raja, "but God is all-comprehending, all-powerful, self-manifest. Then why does He not of Himself show Himself to us?"

"If," said Sivanarayan, pointing to a pundit who was at that moment receiving harsh treatment from the servants at the Raja's gate, "if you would consider the difference in your treatment of myself, whom at some pains you have brought from a hut to a palace, and of that man who, to gain a few rupees, daily seeks and is daily refused admittance to your presence, you will find the true solution of your problem."

"That man," said the Raja, "has no other object in trying to see me except to force from me a small gift. He belongs to such a large class that it is beyond my power to satisfy them all. It is for this reason that he is kept out. But you are a Mahātmā, wearing a body only for the world's good. The house you visit is sanctified by your presence."

"It comes, then, to this: you keep him at a distance because he has selfish ends to serve, you associate with me gladly because you think I have no such end in view. Thus it is that God hides Himself from those who seek Him with a selfish desire. But to the same man He reveals Himself when he sheds those desires. He is self-manifest."

"You speak the words of truth. But looking at myself I feel that without God's grace purity of mind or desirelessness is unattainable by man's own exertions."

"True," said Sivanarayan, "if God's commandments are kept even at the prompting of desire, by His grace desirelessness comes in time. But no good comes to one who remains inactive because he thinks it is not good to worship God with a selfish desire."

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The Hindu and the Englishman.

A pundit, who was a firm believer in Hindu rites, ceremonies, and institutions, gently remonstrated with Sivanarayan as to the latter's practice of imparting to Englishmen the sacred name OM and allowing them to make offerings in the fire.

"What of that?" said Sivanarayan: "Englishman is only a name imagined by man. But what is the substance of which this is a name? Apart from the self-manifest Eternal Being, who includes in Himself the moving and the stationary, what and where is any substance called the 'Englishman.' As you are a combination of the 'seven limbs of God' so is the Englishman. What is not in the Englishman is not in you. Looking at what substance am I to accept you and reject the Englishman?"

"The substance is the same, no doubt, but qualities are different. The Englishman is constantly killing creatures; neither mercy nor tenderness is in his heart."

"The qualities that God puts into an individual are active in him. Condemn no one. All creatures are parts, images, or children of God. All creatures must therefore be equally treated with mercy. It is unworthy of a rational man to cut the throat of another's child for his own child's good. Look at the number of animals slaughtered in Mother Kali's name. The blood and bones go to the earth, the flesh is eaten by the worshippers, the skin is used for making drum-heads. What does Mother Kali eat? How many finny creatures go to furnish the Hindu's daily meal? How can you, then, hold the Moslems and Christians guilty and the Hindus innocent of taking life? God looks impartially on all. For the same act He will not condemn one and justify another. He will pardon or punish all equally. But let that pass. Listen to the narration of what I have witnessed at

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different times in different places. If you consider these incidents, casting aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, and social selfishness, your errors will be removed."

I.

Rajputana suffers from a permanent scarcity of water. In places it is impossible to sink a well or excavate a tank even at great expense. Hindus, desirous of religious merit, keep up, by the roadside, a supply of water in proper receptacles. A Brahmin is paid for the care and distribution of the water.

At midday a donkey was carrying a heavy load. It was in the territories of the Maharaja of Jeypore. The donkey, thirsty and tired, was gladdened by the sight of water on the roadside and attempted to drink it. The animal was too stupid to understand that the water was not intended for all living things needing it, but was reserved for the benefit of cows, so that the giver might acquire merit. In putting his head into the trough the donkey fell dead in the middle of the road under the blows of the Brahmin, who in great exultation exclaimed: "You rogue! Is a donkey to drink the water meant for cows?"

"What caste are you?" the Brahmin asked me on my begging a drink of water.

"Very low caste," said I.

"My drinking pot will be spoiled if I let you use it. Bring out your own drinking vessel."

"I have none."

"Then be off."

"Men," I said, "have so completely turned away from God and grown so dull of understanding that they would not give a drink of water to a sentient being who is visible Siva, and would yet in the name of Siva bring water from distant Rameswaram or Benares to pour it out

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on a block of stone. They see not that stone, devoid of sense and organs, can have no use for it."

II.

A milkman was driving a cow by the side of Chowringi Road towards Kalighat. To prevent the animal from straying, the rope round its neck was tied to one of its forelegs. How painful movement was to the animal in this condition the man never considered. An Englishman came riding from the opposite direction. He took pity on the poor cow, and pressed its owner, with the help of a whip, to untie the foreleg, and threatened him with further punishment unless he led the cow holding the rope round its neck. The milkman obeyed the precept of the mighty guru—the whip—craving forgiveness.

III.

A dog, with a festering sore on its head, which he could not hold straight, was passing along Dhurrumtollah Street. Whichever direction he took he was driven away by the passers-by. Some merciful Englishmen took pity on him, washed the sore, and applied medicament. They gave it in charge of a servant, who was present, with directions to treat the sore and take care of the dog until its recovery, and then let it go.

IV.

Among the passengers of a Kalighat horse-car were two Englishmen. The benches were full. Two ladies stopped the car to get in. Before the conductor could send them away, the two Englishmen respectfully gave up their seats to the ladies and stood at the back by the conductor's side. After these four had got out, three women, one English and two Indian, attempted to get in. There was room then for three or four more passengers. But wherever they went for seats the other passengers spread out or

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put their umbrellas on the bench, and prevented them from sitting down. They courteously requested accommodation, which none granted. The English lady sat down, pushing her neighbour aside, advising the others to do likewise, but they were too confused to profit by the example. The passengers, in their own tongue, were speaking of the lady in an indecent and insulting manner. She happened to understand them. "You are cowards," she exclaimed, "unmanly savages to insult me. How should you like such language being used to your own mothers and sisters? If you preserve the honour and dignity of other people's mothers and sisters God will preserve your own from indignity and dishonour." But they were unmoved. The lady shouted to the police for assistance. I left wondering at God's mercy which could save even men like these.

V.

A carter, wearing the holy thread, had laden his cart so heavily that after proceeding a short distance one of the bullocks broke down completely. The carter was in vain urging the poor creature forward with cruel torture. "Why," asked an Englishman, who happened to arrive on the spot, "do you needlessly ill-treat your animal?"

"It won't move on otherwise."

The Englishman unyoked the bullock, and, putting the carter in its place, with blows bade him draw the cart. Unable to move under the weight he piteously cried to be let off.

"You are a Hindu. These animals, you say, are your gods. Consider how you are treating them. When you feel pain you can call out for relief. But these dumb creatures are unable to express the intensest pain. Hence it is man's duty, through foresight, to prevent their suffering. God has given man dominion over other creatures. By an unjust treatment of them, man becomes

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answerable to God. To work them according to their different capacities, in obedience to God's commandments, is acceptable with Him. By what gives you pleasure and pain measure that of all others. My ill-treatment of you was intended to teach you this lesson."

"My lord," said the pundit at the end of the discourse, "is there no fault in the Englishman's character?"

"I don't say that good and base qualities are not to be found in all persons. But if men disregarded the evil in others, and encouraged one another in righteousness, God will hide away all evil and maintain every one in joy, establishing goodness as supreme on this earth. Of this there is no doubt."

Are you an Incarnation of God?

This inquiry was addressed to Sivanarayan by some young men from a village not far from Calcutta. The subjoined letter contains his answer:—

"Hold your hearts steadfast in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light—the parent, teacher, and soul. With peace at heart and sobriety of understanding fulfil your temporal and spiritual duties, so that in all things you and all belonging to you may rest as joy in the joy supreme. Be contented with little, and active in doing others good, so that the world's good may be accomplished. In the world's good is your own, and in yours the world's. For the world is full of your soul and God. Be zealous in the performance of both kinds of duty. Be lukewarm in nothing. What is lukewarmly done is never done well.

"Having duly received your letter I have become acquainted with the contents thereof. Fear not. Be anxious about nothing. Fix your thoughts on the Ruler of hearts. He is full of goodness and will do good.

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"You have inquired about Divine incarnation. Reflect. What is naught *is* not. What is naught *is* not to all. What is naught is not in the visible or invisible. The Being or Truth is but one. The truth is truth to all. The truth is and never can be naught. The truth is self-existent, formless, and possessed of forms, the manifest and the unmanifest, the visible and the invisible. In other words, comprehending in Himself the cause or substance, the subtle or life, and the gross or matter, He is infinite, impartible. Beside Him no other is, was, will, or can be. To Him are applied two classes of attributes, indicative of aspects, namely, formless, attributeless, beyond mind and speech, transcending knowledge. This is one class. The other class is possessed of forms and attributes, manifest, perceptible, visible, and consisting of earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, the moon and sun—light. These last are called in the scriptures of this country the 'limbs' of the all-comprehending Being, the Powers (Sakti), and gods and goddesses, and by many other names. From Him proceed all things, moving and stationary, the female and male, Pirs, Paigambars, Auliyas, Rishis, Munis, Christ, and all other incarnations, by Him they continue in existence, and into Him they enter in the end. He is omnipotent. In all ages even He, in the form of incarnations, accomplishes the world's salvation. None know Him or honour Him. Hence the world suffers. If refuge is sought in Him, craving His forgiveness, and what pleases Him is done with discrimination, He will work the good of all. For He is full of goodness. He manifests Himself in one physical body and takes away the world's burden. If such be His will He can by internal prompting save the world through the smallest ant. Separate from Him I have no power by which the meanest thing can be done. When His work is done He will be known."

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SUMMING UP.

"Tell me, sir," said a busy lawyer, whose English education had taken away his reverence for the religious forms of his country, "briefly and in plain, intelligible language the substance of your teaching."

"Free from thoughts of self, attend to these words and understand their true meaning.

"Worship in love God, who is formless and attributeless and yet who is, and is possessed of all the forms and attributes, who is gross or physical, and subtle or living existence, and the cause or substance of all, who is all that moves and all that moves not, who is the one, all-comprehending Being, whose intelligent expression is the light men call the sun and moon.

"Facing the sun and moon, bow down to Him, the author of all good, uniting yourself to His all-comprehending completeness.

"Let each one out of his worldly possessions feed God in His form, called the fire, with things that please the taste and smell, and fulfil, to the extent of each one's power, the needs of all His creatures.

"Endeavour always to keep the mind, body, earth, water, and air pure and clean.

"Thus acting, man will be happy now and for ever. Nothing more is required. Too many ceremonies vex the soul and weary the body. In them there is no good."

"Are you," questioned the educated Hindu, "a worshipper of the sun, moon, and fire?"

"In answer," said Sivanarayan, "I can only pray to the God who really is.

"O Thou all-comprehending Complete Being, Thou art our Father in thy formless, attributeless, transcendent aspect, and in the opposite aspect Thou art even our Mother. Hidden to our mind and senses, and yet, possessed of all powers and glory, Thou art present before us all and

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prominently as the light. In these different aspects Thou art impartible, secondless, the source of all love, and the ordainer of all good, temporal and spiritual. But Thy ungrateful creatures, imagining a conflict between Thy aspects, are working woe unto themselves.

"O Thou Complete One, Thou art complete in expression, inclusive of the formless substance, and complete in substance, inclusive of the forms or expressions, and self-existent for ever and ever. Thy creatures, in blindness of spirit, are unable to receive Thee in Thy completeness. If they are called on to receive Thee, Complete One, by the help of Thy expression called the light, which is Thy glory and power, Thy very self as the Lord Supreme, they spurn the instruction, in their blindness, as teaching the worship of inanimate matter, of a finite thing. May their sins be forgiven!

"Om Santih. The peace of God be with you all."

FINIS.

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APPENDIX I.

THE SEVEN QUESTIONS.

I.—True Renunciation.

"Who is a man of true renunciation?" "The great-souled sādhu." With this answer the question was submitted to the decision of Sivanarayan, who replied, saying:—"True, a sādhu is a man of renunciation. But it must be soberly considered in what respect is he so. In its true light the renunciation of the householder is greater than his. The sādhus view this world as the fabric of a dream, and they renounce it as unreal. Even then some individuals of that class are subject to the egotistic conceit that they are men of renunciation, and others also look upon them as such because they have cut themselves off from the world. The sādhu takes a pride in renouncing what is unreal. But the householder, in becoming attached to the world, renounces the truth, which is God. In other words, the householder in fulfilling the duties divinely imposed on him has often to hide himself from God, the all-comprehending Supreme Being, whose expression is light, who is the parent, teacher, and soul of all, in whom all things are to be found. Then whose renunciation is the truer and greater? It behoves every man to pause and ponder what thing is his to accept or give up? Man has not the power to produce even a blade of grass. Can he, then, say with truth, 'This have I given up or this accepted'? He is powerless alike to renounce or accept. All things are God's; he is also God's. Comprehending all things and

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persons, He is secondless and expressed as light. He can neither be taken nor left. He who is equal-minded to all that is, is the man of true renunciation. He alone knows what renunciation truly is. Be he an ascetic recluse or a social householder, he makes no distinction between the two conditions."

II.—Woman and Sūdra.

The Marwari, intending the question for Sivanarayan, asked the pundit Joykishen why women and sūdras had no right to utter the holy name OM, the sacred formula Gāyatri, to make offering in the fire, and to study the Vedas. The pundit replied such injunctions were found in some of the scriptures, and invited Sivanarayan to explain the reason.

"Rights and disabilities," said Sivanarayan, "are found in all creatures. I shall explain the principle from palpable instances, so that you may apply it to matters less obvious. The thirsty man will not find pleasure in food, but in water. He therefore has a right to water and a disability in respect of food. Similarly, the hungry man has a right to food and not to water. The man who is deeply attached to objects of sense, who is devoid of aspirations towards the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light, the individual and universal soul, finds not joy in what is scriptural. Such a man has no right concerning God and other holy things. That right is to be denied of that condition of mind, be that condition found in a woman, a sūdra, or a Brahmin. The man who inclines not to objects of sense, or while so inclining is inspired with a desire for God to be united with Him intimately, losing all feeling of separateness, to know Him and worship Him in love and devotion, such a man has a disability in respect of things of sense and a right to things of God, the holy name OM, the sacred formula Gāyatri, fire offerings, Vedic studies, and the

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practice of Brahamachārya.[1] From the doing of good works good results ensue, be the doer a woman, a sūdra, or a Brahmin. In your Institutes of Manu it is said: 'The sūdra attains Brahminhood and the Brahmin falls into the condition of sūdra.' The Brahmin of evil life is a sūdra, and the sūdra, doing good works, is a Brahmin. One of the Upanishads says: 'Whoso knows God is a Brahmin.' 'Who sees at all times everything around filled with God is a Brahmin.' Judged by this test one Brahmin may be found in ten millions. The Yajur Veda[2] says: 'Proclaim these words of blessedness to the people, the Brahmin, the prince, the sūdra, to the friend and the stranger.' The plain intent of this text is that all should search the Vedas for God, the cream of all scriptures, and do good works. Let the outcaste 'Chandāla,' or one deemed lower even than he, study the Vedas and other scriptures, receive the true spirit thereof, and inspired by that spirit perform his duties, human and divine. To this there should be no hindrance. The invocation of God by His name OM, the Gāyatri-worship, the end whereof is the acquisition of that knowledge which reveals God, who is all-comprehending, complete, expressed as light, these constitute the true study of the Vedas. The Vedas are but a name for wisdom. The scripture which teaches truth, the person that teaches truth, should be accepted as the Vedas or wisdom. This true wisdom, filling all things, within and outside of you, is one, and manifested to your sense as light. Guided by the true meaning of these words understand all things."

"It is written in the scriptures," added the Marwari, "by birth comes the sudra, by reason of the Sacraments one is called Dwija (twice-born), by scriptural studies one becomes a Vipra (learned man), he who knows Brahma, the Supreme Being, is a Brahmin. On birth

[1] The life of self-denying search after God.
[2] Bk. xxvi, v. 2.

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a man has no notion as to the nature of the self or God; this condition is indicated by the word sudra. By purification and acquisition of knowledge he attains to the condition of 'Dwija' and 'Vipra.' When through love and devotion the individual sees God, uniting himself with that all-comprehending, complete Being, manifested as light, he is called a Brahmin. He may also be called in that condition Brahma."

"True," said Sivanarayan.

"To attain to that condition is the supremest good fortune," said Joykishen.

Another pundit who was present seemed not to understand, though he understood, and said: "How can a sudra be allowed to do the works of a Brahmin?"

"What is it that you call sudra?" asked Sivanarayan; "what substance is signified by that name? Is the physical or the subtle body or are the baser qualities of character or the evil acts of life called sudra? If the subtle body, without which the physical body is inert and unintelligent, then all creatures are equally sudra. If the soul be sudra, then all creatures are sudra. If the physical body be sudra all creatures cannot but be sudra, all physical bodies being equally composed of flesh, blood, bones, etc. In truth or substance creatures are not Brahmin, sudra, or any other caste. In reality the division into castes is a social convention, founded originally upon differences of individual qualities, habits, and occupations. In truth no caste exists. Whoso is gifted with good qualities and whose works are good is a Brahmin, one of an opposite character is a sudra. You can see for yourselves that one who is honoured to-day in Hindu society as a Brahmin is hated and despised to-morrow on becoming a Christian or Musalman, his very touch being avoided by Hindus as pollution. But what has he done? He has merely changed from the society of his birth to the society of his adoption, and with that

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change has changed his habits and mode of life. His physical body, senses, and organs have undergone no change. What he was, the same he remains. The senses and organs continue to perform their proper functions, as ordained by God. This ordination can be altered by none. The eye alone will see, the ear hear, whatever the society to which a man is attached or the religion he professes. The soul is neither Hindu nor Christian nor Mahomedan, the name alone changes. You see it and understand it not, reaping the bitter fruits of unwisdom."

III.—Penitent Perverts.

"Should a Hindu convert to Christianity or Mahomedanism be taken back into the society of his birth?"

"Listen," said Sivanarayan, "with patience and decide with sober discrimination. The pure can communicate their purity to the impure. The pure tongue of fire can lap up all things foul into its own pure essence. The ocean receives all waters and remains unperturbed in its fulness. When the Hindus were pure and great they accepted all men, establishing them in the performance of duty. So long as the Hindus had vigour of mind and body, they looked on all alike. Even now, if there be a man amongst you pure and great as the fire or ocean he would receive into the Hindu fold all desirous of entering it, making them repeat the name of God, OM, as often as may be deemed necessary. But a weak man, overcome by the hesitancy of fear, will never venture to be righteous."

IV.—OM.

The Marwari asked, "What is OM, what is His appearance, where is He, has He a form or is He formless? If formless, He will not respond to sense or thought; if He has form, He will have the opposite characteristic."

"Saints and sages," said Sivanarayan, "have

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expounded this subject as God moved them. I shall explain it to you so that having seen it in the world of sense you can apply the subtle significance to all things, within and outside, above and below. Of God in His attributeless, invisible aspect the name OM has not been imagined. Sages and saints have applied that name to Him in that aspect which is expressed as the universe, moving and stationary, and sometimes called the 'body' of God. Repeated uttering of this name constitutes an act of divine worship. In His expressed aspect, the root elements of that name are represented by the sounds *A, U, M,* which again represent Brahamā, Vishnu, Siva, or the three forces or qualities, *rajas,*[1] *sattwa,*[2] and *tammas,*[3] accepted by philosophers. From these all things proceed, persist, and end in. Thinking of Him as creating the universe by His *rajas* energy He is called Brahamā, as preserving the universe by *sattwa* energy He is called Vishnu, and as destroying or withdrawing creation into Himself by His *tammas* energy He is called Siva. Energy is visibly present as light. As presented to our consciousness Energy assumes seven forms or aspects. These seven are variously called in the scriptures the seven substances, the seven elements, the seven Rishis, the seven Vyāritis (amplifications) of Gāyatri, the seven case inflexions in grammar. With *ahankāra* (self-consciousness) added these seven are known as the eight *prakritis* or natures of things. Under the endless multitude of names these seven are seen. They are the perceptible earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, the moonlight, and the sunlight. From the earth and water proceed flesh, bones, and blood, from the fire powers of digestion and speech, from the air the breath of life, from the ākāsa hearing, from the moonlight the mind which doubts and resolves, from the sunlight

[1] i.e. the outgoing impulse.
[2] i.e. illuminating or intelligent influence.
[3] i.e. destroying or inhibiting influence.

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the powers of sight and discrimination. From light in the last-named form comes the understanding of the Vedas, the Bible, the Puran, the Koran, and all other scriptures of the world. By association with this light all temporal and spiritual actions are performed. All that moves or is stationary, the female and the male, have proceeded from this sevenfold manifestation of OM. The female and the male being alike OM have equally the privilege of using that sacred syllable in invocation. In the Brahmin's daily prayer the OM is invoked as female: *Om āyāhi varade devi*, etc."[1]

"I do not know, my lord," said the Marwari, "if I have correctly received your teaching. The seven-formed OM constitutes the body of God. Are these seven different persons or one and the same person?"

"Make your mind one-pointed," continued Sivanarayan, "and listen with attention. He is not seven, He is one. To external vision the seven appear as in your body different powers or faculties of sensation and action. You hear with the ears, see with the eyes, and so forth. The one organism called the body is thus seen differently by external vision, that is, by confining the attention to what seems from outside. But the conscious agent who perceives the body or presides over the operations of the senses and faculties is the individual You, one and indivisible. Similarly, although the seven are perceived by you externally the One Supreme Being is self-existent, comprehending all things in Himself. As you, through each limb, sense, and faculty, perform the work appropriate to each, so does He. By water He cools and by fire He heats, and not the reverse. As you, the conscious agent, perceive the pleasure or pain or any other disturbance connected with every organ and faculty, so does He, the Indweller and Regulator of the universe, knows all things and shows all things to individuals by

[1] "OM, come thou goddess, giver of boons."

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promptings from within. As you are supreme in your body so in this manifested universe the light is supreme. At the rising and the setting of light, which is the supreme eye, bow down to the all-comprehending Supreme Being and constantly invoke Him by uttering inwardly His name OM. He will understand and mercifully unite you to His external manifestation, which is light, and inwardly you shall dwell in the indescribable, unindicatable Supreme Being, in everlasting joy. The loving child bows down before his parent's eye. The parent knows 'This is my beloved child bowing down before me.' He answers love with love. So acts God to all who worship Him before light, the divine Eye."

V.

"Sages have taught different doctrines in different scriptures. Which shall we accept and which reject? Certitude of conviction nowise comes to us."

"All your doubts will disappear if you search after substance. Examine with discrimination what substance or truth there is in the universe beside which all else is unsubstantial, untruth. Thus discriminating hold your thoughts steadfast in the all-comprehending Supreme Being, manifested as light—the Truth, Substance, or Reality. If every man on earth preached a doctrine different from the rest, that Being will neither increase nor grow less or otherwise undergo any change. He will be what He is. Consider how many doctrines have, in the march of time, appeared on earth and disappeared from it. The force of doctrines has not nor will bring into existence even a blade of grass. The Supreme Being is the same through beginningless time. In the formless, attributeless aspect He is what He is; in the other aspect, comprehending the endless variety of forms, He is manifested as light. In the forms of earth, water, fire, air, ākāsa, light, moon, and sun, you all persist ever the

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same. Rishis, Munis, Pirs, Paigambars, Jesus Christ, and all the other incarnations of every race and faith cannot make Him grow more or less. Doctrines may be uttered by the mouth or written down in scriptures; the One will never be many. It therefore behoves all men, princes, and peasants, with discrimination to establish their minds on what is—the Truth; and thus established to fulfil their duties, temporal and spiritual. Thus will man's troubles be ended. The Truth is but another name for the Supreme Being, all-comprehending, and expressed as light. In His two aspects afore-mentioned He is complete and all-inclusive. He being accepted all errors and doubts will vanish. It is not necessary for man to accept or reject doctrines. From one view-point all doctrines are the same. It is palpable to your senses that men of all doctrines dwell upon the same earth, by the same fire they all fulfil their fleshly needs, the same air is the life-breath of all, with the same light they all see to perform the work of life. Can God alone be different according to the difference of doctrine? Why do you fall into error? Cast aside all thoughts of glory and disgrace, triumph and defeat, pride, and selfishess, and with peace at heart and sobriety of understanding search out the Truth or Reality, and all errors will end."

"My lord," said one, voicing the thoughts of all present, "you have spoken the words of truth. We ought to receive them as such, and if God has mercy on us we shall so receive them."

VI.

"Should women be educated? Some say this is an imperative duty, while others condemn it, as generating pride and other evil tendencies in women."

"Judge, you all present, with sobriety and calmness. That education generates evil tendencies in women is a mistake. If education led to such results in women,

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why should it be different in the case of men? Education should, therefore, be condemned in both. You can all see that among men there are countless numbers with evil tendencies. Such tendencies flow from the corrupt natures of individuals. Education invigorates conscience, renders patience, sobriety, and steadfastness active. And these in their turn by degrees eradicate the tendencies for evil.

"It is the duty of the State and the individual to establish and promote the education of women. Educated women can properly bring up their children, and fulfil with discrimination all other temporal and spiritual duties. If for any reason the husband is prevented from maintaining the family, an educated wife becomes an efficient substitute. If widowed, she can be the stay of her infant children. Without education she is helpless and often driven to mean occupations or to the path of sin, losing all opportunities for temporal or spiritual advancement. Consider the European woman and her helpfulness to husband and family. You will always find educated labour more profitable than uneducated. With true education all will be well, and men and women, in harmony, spend their days in the fulfilment of their duties, temporal and spiritual. In the subtle qualities woman is man's superior. Under similar conditions a woman more rapidly advances in human and spiritual knowledge than man. Moved by selfishness, man shuts out knowledge from woman, lest male authority should suffer. But God's law is different; all creatures should have full liberty to serve Him by the fullest development of all the faculties by God's hand planted in their breasts."

"True, my lord," said the pundit, "if we can only agree among ourselves."

VII.

"Is child marriage to be preferred to marriage in maturer years?"

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"Listen with undisturbed minds and decide with sobriety of thought and discriminating judgment. God should be worshipped with obedience, in accordance with His nature and laws as manifested to our sense and reason. To pluck a green mango is against God's law; such a fruit is not agreeable in taste nor wholesome in effect. Its seed does not germinate, or if, under unusual conditions, it does the growth is sterile or the fruit poor. If, on the other hand, the ripe fruit is taken, in obedience to God's law, it pleases the palate, nourishes the body. A vigorous tree grows from its seed, yielding sweet and strengthening fruit. Similarly, the children of immature parents are weak in body and mind, sickly and short-lived. Opposite characteristics are inherited from parents of maturer years and understanding. Such is God's purpose. Let children, between 5 and 20 years of age, be well instructed in their human and divine duties. Let their minds be established on the all-comprehending Being, manifested as light, and let them accept the social discipline of obedience to elders in years and understanding. Thus acting, men reach the happiness God is ready to bestow on all."

"We ought to accept your words with our hearts and obey them in our acts," said the hearer.

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APPENDIX II.

In the course of his wanderings many instances of fraud, practised by holy ascetics and learned Brahmins, in the name of religion, came under Sivanarayan's notice. Some of these are set forth here, names being suppressed for obvious reasons. An examination of the narratives shows that the ignorant superstition of the people is the chief confederate of priestly imposition and holy rascality. Derisive amusement and heartless ridicule are the only consolers of the victim of misplaced confidence. Naturally he hides his fate from his neighbours, who are too timid and lazy to punish the wrong, and too cruel to sympathize with suffering.

There is no power in the universe which is or can be outside of God. None may wrest the end from the means appointed by Him thereto or achieve an end, except by the means rendered appropriate by Him. He heats by fire and cools by water. The work of the one He does not perform by the other, His laws none can transcend; what men call miracles are also subject to His laws. Why should He allow a miracle without an adequate cause? Those alone fall into error and are deceived whose faces are turned away from Him. Those who seek refuge in the Supreme Being manifested as light find wisdom which removes all errors and establishes man in the supreme joy as joy itself. Of this, doubt there is none.

The holy impostor, taking advantage of some temporal or spiritual weakness of the beholder, shows false miracles for his own gain or glorification, or to serve some equally selfish end. The ensuing narratives make this clear. But on reflection it will be evident that of all things God alone

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is the master. As nothing is outside of Him, in Him all things are equal. If glory really exists it must be His form, quality, or power; transcending Him no glory is or can be, anywhere or at any time. As the all-comprehending glory He is eternally self-existent. To leave Him in search of glory is folly. Looking to the world's good, He bestows on an individual all powers necessary for the work assigned to him. In this there is nothing strange or miraculous. An unfaltering, loving faith in Him compasses the temporal and spiritual end of existence, without any ceremonial display. Without His mercy nothing can be accomplished. If He be merciful there is nothing to obstruct His mercy. None can deceive him whose refuge is God. He being found all ends are gained, all wants fulfilled.

I.—Milk from Wine.

In the midst of incantations and other deceptive ceremonies, pills of pounded *sāti*[1] rice are secretly introduced into the bottle of liquor. The bottle shaken, the liquid assumes a milky colour before the beholder's eyes. The holy rogue is worshipped as a god, and God is forsaken.

II.—Manufacturing Gold.

A hollow pellet of cow-dung or ground charcoal is filled with a bit of very inferior gold. Concealing this on his person, the artful sannyāsi, while preparing his chillum (earthen smoking-bowl) with ganja (*Cannabis indica*) or tobacco, inserts it in the bowl. The smoking finished, the bowl is emptied so that his host can see the contents, and the holy man takes leave. The simple-minded householder notices the gold, and attributes it to the blessings of Siva, whom, he is convinced, he has entertained unaware in the form of the sannyāsi. With humble

[1] A red rice from Behar.

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prayers and earnest solicitations the wise ascetic, lingering at no great distance, is brought back to the house and worshipped in due form. His fame spreads and gives him the desired opportunity to steal valuables and not unfrequently to defile hospitable households.

Sometimes the sannyāsi promises to double all gold and silver things brought to him. The piece of cloth with its ends tied into a knot, and hanging from his shoulder as a bag (*jhuli*), contains hollow earthen balls. Into one or more of these, through suitable openings, are introduced the articles to be doubled. The sannyāsi and his host shut themselves up in a room to worship the balls, containing the articles, with proper rites and ceremonies. While the host, as instructed, meditates with closed eyes empty balls are substituted for those originally used. The worship ended, the sannyāsi departs leaving strict injunction not to disturb the balls till the following day, when the promise will be fulfilled and the articles doubled. The injunction is followed, and the credulous householder loses what he had in the hope of getting more.

If the conditions are favourable the sannyāsi in watching the balls through the night disappears with all he can collect, cutting a hole, if necessary, through the mud floor or the wattle walls.

III.—The Living Lingam.

One day two sannyāsis came to see Sivanarayan. Each was clad in a scanty loin-cloth, besmeared all over with ashes, and a bag, formed by the ends of a piece of cloth being tied together in a knot, hung from the shoulder of each. After some conversation one of them, saying that the swāmi (meaning Sivanarayan) ought to be shown the living *lingam*, produced from his bag an iron ring, a magnet, and a piece of stone, to which was given the name Siva. He laid the iron ring on the ground and placed the stone on it. Sitting down at a little distance

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he commenced washing the magnet and said: "O lord Siva, in mercy come forward so that thy glory may be seen of all." Owing to the unevenness of the ground Siva fell down and the ring moved towards the magnet, to the shame and discomfiture of the sannyāsis. Sivanarayan said to them: "If you wanted Siva to move, why did you not select a smoother surface? But your intention was evil, injurious to yourselves and others. Do not harm people by such deceptions." The sannyāsis left, tongue-tied with shame.

IV.—The Divine Script.

A sannyāsi and his disciples came to the house of an educated Bengali gentleman at Bhowanipur and prophesied imminent calamity to him and his sons. "If you do not believe," he continued, "try a test. Write this question on a piece of paper, burn it, and put the ashes in my hands." This was done, and the sannyāsi rubbed the ashes on the palms of his hands, which were then carefully washed and shown to those present. To the terror and amazement of all, on one hand the writing was distinct, "*Sighra Mrityu*" ("Death impending"). Doubt was no longer possible, and the sannyāsi was earnestly entreated to remove the evil. Propitiated by much solicitation, he caused a question to be similarly written inquiring as to the means of averting death. The same course was followed as before, but the ashes were placed on a disciple's hand. This time the writing on the palm promised removal of the evil on payment of Rs. 100—to the sannyāsi. The money was paid, and the sannyāsi gave his blessings.

The secret of the mysterious writing was subsequently discovered. Being in the juice of the Indian fig (*vata*) the writing became as it dried invisible. When rubbed the ashes stuck to the gummy juice, and brought out the writing on the hands being washed.

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V.—The Bleat of a Goat's Ashes.

A Raja of Upper India fell under the influence of some Brahamachāris. He looked upon them with feelings of profound respect and veneration. They induced the Raja to undertake a fire-ceremony (*yajna*) in which a goat, immolated in the fire, would, by supernatural agency, bleat from its ashes. The fireplace was built and a shed erected over it, under the guidance of the Brahamachāris, whose quarters were constructed just behind the shed and touching it. Admission to these quarters was strictly prohibited to all. On the appointed day the fire-ceremony was celebrated with much pomp and display. The goat was sacrificed, the body cut up and consigned to the fire. The chief of the Brahamachāris repeated many holy texts and called upon the invisible goat to bleat. Wonderful to relate, the muffled bleat of a goat was heard by all present, who immediately prostrated themselves before the holy men and blessed their stars and of their ancestors for the miracle they had witnessed. The chief slapped the Raja's back, and said that by his spiritual powers he had rescued from torments the seven ascendents of the Raja. A promise was also given to save the three lines of the Raja's connection—father's, mother's, and father-in-law's. The Brahamachāris were worshipped with divine honours and rich gifts.

The Raja's son loved truth and had a balanced mind. None but God, he was convinced, had power to call the dead back to life, to create, preserve, or destroy. All powers were His. Moved by this conviction he endeavoured to find out the true explanation of the apparent miracle. He pushed aside the resisting Brahamachāris and forced his way into their sanctum. Inside he saw a heap of loose earth by the side of a pit, from which emerged a man with a living goat. The pit was found to lead by a gallery to the neighbourhood of the fire, and the mystery was a mystery no longer. He

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had the Brahamachāris seized and brought before the Raja, who in rage and humiliation wanted them to be killed." "To slay such as you," cried the Raja, "is a service to God. For to punish the wicked is to protect the good. But I forgive you this time. Such conduct, if repeated, will work you harm in this world and the next."

VI.—The Voice of the Divine Mother.

A Raja heard the voice of the divine Mother by the grace of a deceitful Brahamachāri. The customary water-pot was consecrated in the name of Mother Durga, and two bumble-bees were introduced into it along with the necessary mango twig before the earthen saucer was placed on the top. After performing worship in due form the Raja, under direction, made a libation of water on the saucer, causing the insects to hum the louder, and believed the noise to be the divine voice blessing him. In ecstasy the Raja granted the Brahamachāri a pension, which, together with the deception, still continues.

VII.—The Mortal's Vision of the Immortal.

A learned pundit, living in the odour of sanctity, for a fee of Rs. 500 promised to show a Hindu gentleman of Upper India the god Bhairav. The fee paid, he was led, in the depth of night, to a tree at the end of his village. By torchlight he saw on the tree a fearsome form which spoke to him. That was Bhairav, without doubt, and many gifts were placed at his feet. Enthusiastic over the vision vouchsafed to him he wrote to his brother, a Subadar in the native army, to come and be blessed likewise. The Subadar had by contact with men gained a greater knowledge of the world. He wrote home saying he would soon obtain leave, and requested all things to be kept ready against his coming. On his arrival he repaired by night to the appointed place under the pundit's direction.

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"O lord Bhairav," prayed the pundit to the figure on the tree, "thy devotee has come for a sight of thee. By thy own merit forgive the evil in him and show thyself."

The figure remained silent. The Subadar promised an additional Rs. 200 for celebration of the worship. The pundit prayed: "O Bhairav, this is a devotee of great zeal. He has promised a further sum of Rs. 200 for thy worship. Be gracious to him and speak."

The Bhairav gave an unearthly yell. The Subadar, to be supremely blessed, desired to approach nearer and prostrate himself in adoration.

"Prostrate yourself here," said the pundit, trying to dissuade him; "draw no nearer, else he will be enraged."

"Let him come down from the tree, and I shall lay on his feet five coins of gold."

The influence of gold moved the pundit to pray: "O Lord of mercy, come down from the tree to bless this thy best of devotees."

The figure descended and stood at the foot of the tree. The Subadar whipped up his sword and went for the god, saying: "Declare who you are, or I cut you down."

The figure threw down from his head an inverted black earthen pot pierced with holes, discovered his features, and gasped for breath. Falling at the Subadar's feet the god cried for mercy.

"I am a barber," he sobbed out, "acting as the pundit directs; I am innocent, have mercy on me."

The pundit was seized, and kept a prisoner until he disgorged his ill-gotten gains.

VIII.—The Fasting Saint of Mozaffarpore.

A saint of great repute lived in a Raja's palace not far from Mozaffarpore. In addition to his saintliness he possessed good looks and physical strength. He had led the Raja to believe that he had for the twelve preceding years observed unbroken fast, and stopped the natural

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functions for the removal of bodily refuse. Daily, with closed doors, he offered in the sacred fire large quantities of cream and fruit. The holy ashes he solemnly carried to the fields outside the town and buried them in a solitary spot. These ashes none dared touch for fear of the saint's curse. The saint passed his days in peace and the Raja in the contentment that piety brings. One day a dependant Talukdar came to the Raja and obtained permission to entertain the saint at his own home. This change of habitation caused no break in the even tenour of the saintly days. For the Talukdar nowise departed from the rules observed by the Raja in his treatment of the saint.

After some days very finely powdered croton seed was mixed with the cream brought to the unsuspecting saint, for his daily worship. The doors were closed as usual, and the saint engaged in his devotions. In a little while strange sounds from the room assailed the ears of the frightened attendants, watching outside, and many feet were running fast to carry news of the unwonted occurrence to the master of the house.

Hurrying to the spot the Talukdar shouted to the saint to open the door. There was no response. The door was forced, and the saint found on the floor in collapse from exhaustion. Suitable treatment was followed by recovery. In secret the Talukdar said to the saint: "My lord, if such practices are resorted to by men like you, what are we sinful householders to do? While there is life in the body it must be supplied with food as the lighted lamp with oil. When the lamp is out or the life goes back to its origin neither food nor oil is needed. Our duty it is to hold fast to the all-comprehending God, whose manifestation is light, and supply the reasonable needs of the body."

"True," said the shame-faced saint, "but neither prince nor peasant respects one without some such device."

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"Never mind all that. My unabated hospitality is yours."

The saint was silent, and secretly left by night.

IX.—Laying Ghosts.

A Brahamachāri, on arrival, found a case of sickness in a well-to-do household. To the master of the house he diagnosed the disease as the work of ghosts. The necessary expenses arranged for, the Brahamachāri promised to let the household hear the sound of fighting between the domiciled ghosts and those commissioned by him to expel them. The patient was removed from the sick-room, which the exorcist filled with smoke and locked as he came out. The family collected outside to hear the din of war. None dared approach the room for fear of the unearthly combatants. In trembling hope they heard distinct thuds from the locked room. Throwing themselves at the exorcist's feet they glorified him, and rejoiced at their deliverance from such malignant spirits. In a little while the ghost-layer unlocked the room, and entering it by himself bolted it from within. Soon he came out with his belongings, which had been left inside. He informed the faithful crowd that the earth-bound souls had been sent to heaven, and departed with a handsome fee.

Subsequently he confessed that the supernatural agency invoked by him was but large-sized frogs let out from cloth-bags in his *jhuli* and hopping about under the influence of smoke.

X.—In Terror of Ghosts.

Not far from Mokameh on the East Indian Railway lived a Zemindar, rich and miserly. His spiritual guide, family priests, and generally his servants and dependants, felt injured by his niggardly life. Mysterious disturbances commenced in his house, which he had no difficulty in

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attributing to supernatural agency. Bones and filth were scattered about nightly. Life became intolerable. Watches were set, within and outside the house, but the disturbances continued unabated. He turned to the family priest and begged him to sleep in the house, saying: "We are greatly terrified. Protect us from this dreadful visitation. Stay in the house. Ghosts dare not approach you." The priest consented. But after the first night he reported that the ghosts were very powerful.

"Last night," he continued, "they were actually carrying me, charpoy (stringed bedstead), and all right through the roof. With the help of many muttered formulæ I managed to return with the charpoy."

"Save me," said the Zemindar, putting on his head the dust off the priest's feet, "spare no expense."

His miserliness overcome by supernatural terrors, the Zemindar performed many expensive rites and ceremonies under the direction of his ghostly counsellor, but with no apparent effect on his invisible tormentors. As the last resort he invited to his house ascetics of note from Benares and Hardwar.

The priest with assistants took charge of entertaining the holy men, who, as the events would show, were too well pleased with the attention shown them. After preliminary examination that lasted some days the holy men declared that a large colony of ghosts had established itself in the house, and its dislodgement would involve considerable outlay. Fear loosened the miser's purse; the required ceremonies were performed, and the Zemindar's troubles ended. Restored to peace he dismissed the holy men with bountiful gifts.

But, it would seem, encouraged by the visitors' departure, the ghosts resumed their old practices. The Zemindar with his family passed their nights in the open fields. But the ghosts pursued him there. A well-aimed brickbat coming from a neighbouring cornfield smashed

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the bowl of his hubble-bubble, scattering the fire on his bed. The same night he left with his family and retainers for Benares. After a short respite the old trouble recommenced. A visit to Hardwar led to no better results. Despair seized the Zemindar.

"Death is upon us," he said to his assembled household; "such sumptuous worship of gods and saints have failed to bring help. Let us go home and die." He returned to the house of his fathers prepared for the worst.

Sivanarayan was staying at Mokameh at this time. By his advice none were allowed to live in the house itself except those of the Zemindar's blood. All night they watched the house, within and without. Their labours were rewarded by the discovery of a confidential servant trying to throw strange things—human skull and filth—into the Zemindar's sleeping chamber. When questioned, the servant confessed that he had joined in the conspiracy at the instance of the family priest and other dependants of the Zemindar. The holy men were won over to the unholy cause, and the brickbat that smashed the smoking-bowl was aimed by priestly hands.

The Zemindar was constrained to spare his connections, but the others were expelled with ignominy.

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GLOSSARY.

Aghori. A worshipper of Siva under the name Aghora. A sect of Sivite ascetics, supposed to be addicted to the most disgusting practices.

ākāsa. In Hindu philosophy space considered a material reality, of great tenuity. That element of existence which makes vibration possible, and prevents all matter being condensed into a single rigid drop.

āsan. A seat made of matting, skin, or cloth; the resting-place or abode of a wandering ascetic.

Asoka. The flowering tree *Jonesia Asoca*.

ātchālā. (Beng. *āt*, 'eight'; *chālā*, 'thatch.') A bungalow with eight thatches, i.e. having a doubled-hipped roof.

Auliya. (Arab. 'a companion.') A holy companion of Mahomed.

Babu. Distinctive appellation of a Northern Indian gentleman, equivalent to the French 'Monsieur.'

bael. The Indian wood-apple, fruit and tree (*Ægle marmelos*).

bāruni. A bathing festival in the Hindu month of Chaitra (March–April), when the moon appears in the 25th lunar mansion on the third day before she is at full.

Bhairav. (Skt. 'the terrible one.') A form of Siva.

bhāng. An intoxicating potion, having the leaves of the Indian hemp for its principal ingredient.

Bhārati. One of the ten monastic orders founded by Sankarāchārya.

Bhubaneswari. A name and form of Durga.

Brahamachāri. (Skt. *Brahma*, 'God'; *chāri*, 'practiser.') (1) One under training in perception of God in all things; (2) a celibate Brahminical disciple; (3) a neophyte attached to an ascetic order within the fold of orthodox Brahminism.

Brahmā. The first person of the Hindu trinity. God viewed as presiding over His creative energy, called *rajas*. Energy is often identified with the consciousness pervading it and the material basis resisting it, the distinction being regarded as purely intellectual.

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charpoy. (Hind. *chār*, 'four'; *pai*, 'foot.') A bedstead formed by four upright posts, joined by horizontal bars, over which coarse tapes or rough strings are passed to make the bottom.

chhattra. (Skt. 'umbrella.') A religious hostelry.

dandi. (Skt. 'staff-bearing.') A generic designation of the monastic followers of Sankarāchārya.

dasnāmi. (Hind. *dasi*, 'ten'; *nāmi*, 'having name.') Monks with ten names or sub-orders, claiming Sankarāchārya for founder.

Dattātreya. (Datta of the family of Atri, a Vedic sage and one of the seven patriarchs.) An ancient Hindu sage said to have attained wonderful powers, and deified as an incarnation of Siva.

Devi. A goddess, especially Siva's consort, the many-named and many-formed Durga.

Ganesa. The god with a human body and an elephant's head and trunk, presiding over wisdom, and the remover of obstacles.

Ganja. Indian hemp (*Cannabis Indica*).

Gāyatri. The holy formula of the Brahmin's faith, said to epitomise the whole of the Vedas. It may not be uttered by a Sūdra without profanity, visited by dire penalties, temporal and spiritual. In substance it means: "We meditate upon the intelligence, expressed as light, the lord of all things, and the internal ruler of individuals."

ghāt. Masonry steps leading into a river or tank.

Giri. One of the monastic orders founded by Sankarāchārya.

Goraksha nath. Founder of a religious sect (circ. thirteenth century A.D.) aiming at a fusion of Buddhism and Hinduism.

gotra. Brahminical septs, claiming descent from different sages, named in the Vedas.

guru. Teacher, spiritual director.

halwa. A paste made of cooked flour, clarified butter, and sugar.

Hanumān. Rama's general, a monkey divinely born and gifted with miraculous powers. He is associated in the worship of Rama and also separately worshipped.

jatā. Matted hair, sometimes of great length, worn by ascetics, chiefly of the Sivite sects.

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jhuli. A bag formed by tying into a knot the four ends of a piece of cloth, carried by religious mendicants, hanging from their shoulders.

Kabir. Founder of a religious sect in Northern India (c. 1450), non-idolatrous, monotheistic, and caste-less, taking recruits from Hindus and Moslems.

Kailas. The heavenly abode of Siva and his consort Parvati, situated on a peak of the mountain of that name in Tibet.

Kālighāt. In the suburbs of Calcutta, containing a famous shrine of Kāli.

Kāmākhyā. A name and form of Durga.

Madhvāchārya. Founder of a religious school of orthodox Brahminism (c. thirteenth century A.D.); maintained distinctness of soul and God, and salvation by devotion to the special incarnation Krishna.

Mahātmā. (Skt. *mahā*, 'great'; *ātmā*, 'soul': 'great soul.') A high-caste monk, specially of the Sivite sects.

maund. A measure of weight—80 lbs.

māyā. God's powers considered abstracted from the Divine substance, and therefore unreal; illusion, the phenomenal world.

Mohunt. (Hindi form of *moha*, 'illusion'; *anta*, 'end.') One for whom the illusions of life have ended; the head of a monastery.

mukti. Salvation by realising God.

Muktināth. A name and form of Siva.

muni. (Skt. 'a man of mind.') A Hindu sage devoted to spiritual knowledge.

Nāgās. A sect of mendicants noted for carrying weapons and for scantiness of clothing.

Nānak. Usually called Baba or Father Nānak, founder of the Sikh religion (fifteenth century A.D.); taught unity of God to be worshipped with purity of mind, action, beneficence, and non-idolatrous ceremonies.

nāt mandir. A dancing pavilion attached to a temple or idol-house.

neem. The tree *Melia Azad directa*.

nirākāra. (Skt. *nir*, 'privative'; *ākāra*, 'form.') Formless, applied to the unthinkable, transcendent aspect of the Deity.

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nirguna. Attributeless, of similar application as the last.

Om. The mysterious Divine name; the verbal emblem of God.

Paigambar. (Arab. 'prophet.') Usually applied by Mahomedans to Mahomed, Christ, and the Jewish prophets.

Paramhansa. A monk who has attained the highest spiritual condition.

Pir. A Mahomedan saint.

Prakriti. The totality of God's powers, including the visible universe, but exclusive of the soul.

Puri. One of the ten monastic orders founded by Sankarāchārya.

Purusha. Person, sentience, soul.

Ramānanda. Pupil of Ramānuja, from whose teachings he departed by abolishing caste restrictions (q.v.).

Ramānuja. Founder of a school of Brahminical thought and a Vaishnava sect, worshipping the incarnation Rama (eleventh century A.D.). He taught that God with His twofold powers—matter and soul—was one, and should be worshipped with love.

Ramlilā. An open-air passion play, representing incidents in Rama's life, enacted on the lunar anniversary of his birth in the Spring.

Rishi. A sage who discovered a Vedic hymn which, being coeval with time, cannot have an author.

rudrāksha. The fruits of the *Elæocarpus ganitrus*, which, when dried, are used by the Sivite Hindus as beads for rosaries.

sādhu. 'A true man,' a monk, specially of the Vishnuvite sects.

saguna. 'Having attributes,' same as *sākāra* (q.v.) in another aspect.

sākāra. 'Having a form,' applied to the visible universe, animate and inanimate, considered as an aspect of God.

Sankarāchārya. (The teacher Sankara.) The great Brahminical revivalist and exegetist of the eighth century A.D. He taught the unity of Being, identifying in the order of existence or substance, considered apart from powers and attributes, God, Nature, and Soul.

sannyāsi. (Skt. a man of *sannyās* or renunciation.) A wandering religious mendicant, a monk of Sankarāchārya's order.

Sarvamangalā. (Skt. *sarva*, 'all'; *mangalā*, 'the beneficent one.') A name and form of Durga.

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Sāvitri. Another name for Gāyatri.

shastra. Sacred writings of the Hindus, usually in Sanskrit.

Siva. The third person of the Hindu trinity, God presiding over His destructive energy, called *tamas*.

swāmi. 'Master' or 'sir,' distinctive name of all monks and friars.

swarupa. (Skt. *swa*, 'self'; *rupa*, 'form.') What an object of knowledge is in itself, independently of the knower's thoughts and perceptions.

Talukdar. A fief-holder under the State or a superior landlord.

tattwas. The elements into which, according to the Hindus, existence can be reduced in terms of the senses and faculties of cognition, e.g.: smell, earth; taste, water; sight, fire; touch, air; hearing, ākāsa; mind, moon; judgment, sun.

tripundra. Three upright bars, curved at the lower ends, painted on the forehead as a sectarian mark.

Vaikuntha. The heavenly abode of Vishnu.

Vaishnava. A worshipper of Vishnu.

Virāt. 'The Supreme King,' God as the universe and its Lord.

Vishnu. The second person of the Hindu trinity, God presiding over His preservative energy, called *sattwa*.

Vishnuswami. A Vaishnava religious teacher of Western India, and founder of a monastic order.

Viswanāth. An idol representing Siva, located in the celebrated temple at Benares.

Vyāhriti. 'Amplification' of Om prefixed to the Gāyatri, e.g. Om bhuh (earth), etc.

Zemindar. One holding land as full owner, subject to payment of revenue to the British Government.

Foolish would be the person who would persecute a person who sees God in every object This universe not leaving any thing for God resides in all. we can perceive Through any object in which we may devote our minds to Him (the God)

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